

# SMOKESHOP

THE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY ON SPECIALTY TOBACCO RETAILING

SMOKESHOPMAG.COM | AUGUST 2018

## Procigar Grows

*The Dominican Republic's Premium Cigar Association, Procigar, welcomed Royal Agio Cigars as its newest member at the 11th annual Procigar Festival.*

*On the Cover:  
Inside a curing barn  
at La Flor Dominicana*

### Plus:

- > *IPCPR 2018 Trade Show & Convention: New Merchandise & Awards*
- > *CAA 2018 Mid-Year Legislative Checkup: Many Victories to Date*
- > *NATO Submits ANPRM Comments to FDA on Flavors and Cigars*

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*Cigars*

## RATINGS

Cigar Authority: Stockyard **90**

Cigar Coop: Stockyard **91**

Kaplowitz: Trail Boss **A-**  
Bull **A-**

Smoke Magazine: Trail Boss **93**



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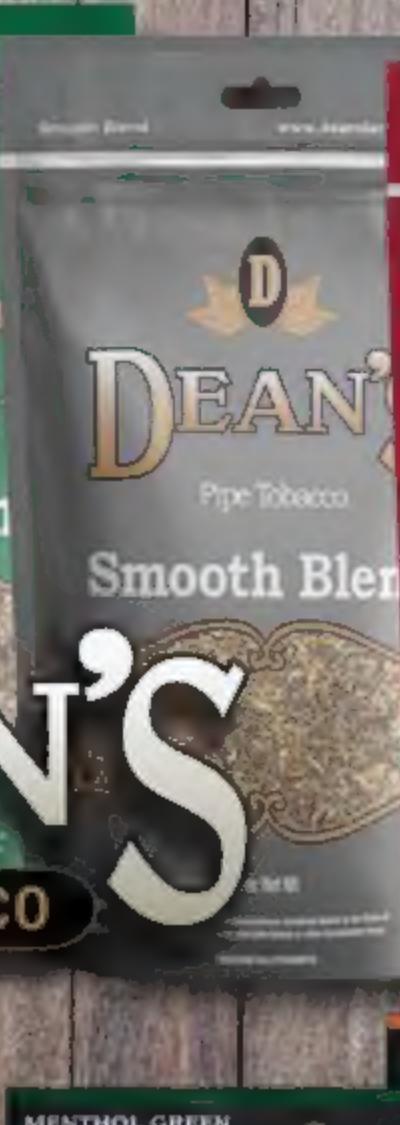


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# Editor's LETTER

## Passions Flair Over Altria's Controversial Position on FDA Regulation of Premium Cigars

Is it reasonable to expect that the premium cigar industry alone, among all other tobacco and vaping products, can successfully carve out a complete exemption from FDA regulation? Well, that has certainly been the hope and belief of the premium cigar industry, which has been heavily pursuing a legislative exemption at the Congressional level as the best case scenario in fighting back against regulations which, if left to come into force as written, would be highly detrimental to all premium cigar makers, but particularly devastating and even fatal for small and medium-sized ones. Pursuit of a legislative exemption is one of several simultaneous efforts the premium cigar industry is taking, in addition to lobbying the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) and others to craft realistic regulations that acknowledge the unique realities for each particular tobacco product. But clearly, building a strong coalition in support of an exemption has been a huge undertaking spanning several years now.

So, when Altria Group submitted public comments on the FDA's Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) on the Regulation of Premium Cigars on July 25, comments that stated the company doesn't support an exemption for premium cigars, it's of little surprise that an instant firestorm ensued.

Altria's divisions include its principal business, cigarette maker Philip Morris, but for the purposes of this ANPRM, it was John Middleton Company (the machine-made producer of pipe tobacco-filled plastic-tipped cigars), and Nat Sherman, which it purchased from the Sherman family in 2017. Nat Sherman's principal business is actually manufacturing additive-free cigarettes, but it also has a long history marketing its own premium cigar brands, heavily revived by the Sherman family in recent years. Premium cigars are estimated to represent only about 1% of the total tobacco market, which certainly frames it as a tiny niche for Altria. But it's a giant niche for those whose business is entirely in the category, so Altria's comments have been a lightning rod.

First came a scathing editorial from *Cigar Aficionado* magazine—the first of many similar responses. Michael Herklotz, vice president of retail and brand development at Nat Sherman International who heads up the company's premium cigar business, stresses that Altria's position that there is no scientific basis for exempting any one category of tobacco products from regulation does not make it an enemy of premium cigars, rather it agrees with the industry's core argument that premium cigars should not be regulated the same as other tobacco products.

"[Altria's] comments clearly articulate that FDA can regulate premium cigars differently and in a simpler and less burdensome way than what was included in the agency's final deeming rule two years ago, which placed all cigars under its authority," Herklotz wrote. "I urge you to read the letter, and our comments, in their entirety and come to your own informed opinion about the company's commitment to the premium cigar industry."

Many aren't buying the argument, perhaps due to Altria's wording that FDA "may" regulate premium cigars differently, versus "should" or "must." Current FDA cigarette regulations are an ill fit when applied to other categories, plain and simple. Each category of tobacco/vaping products, from their conception, production, marketing, sales, and use by the end consumer, is unique.

Michael, a passionate industry role model who has long espoused the pleasures of fine cigars, urges all to read Altria's public comments for themselves. For quick access to both Altria's ANPRM comments and Herklotz' letter, visit [Facebook.com/smokeshopmag](http://Facebook.com/smokeshopmag).

Ted Hoyt, Editor

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## Davidoff of Geneva Opens Williamsburg, Brooklyn Retail Shop and Lounge

BROOKLYN—Davidoff of Geneva, Since 1911, has opened its first New York City retail location outside of Manhattan with the grand opening of its Williamsburg, Brooklyn store in April. The new shop is located just next door to the famous Peter Luger Steakhouse, and meeting local demand for fine premium cigars, pipe tobacco, and luxury cigar accessories. It features a well-appointed walk-in humidor and spacious smoking lounge.

Like all Davidoff locations, the shop features a selection of top premium cigars anchored by its own Davidoff, Winston Churchill, Avo, and Camacho brands but also including leading premium brand and boutique blends.

The luxurious lounge is equipped with free WiFi, flat screen HDTVs, plush leather seating, and humidified lockers that are available to rent on a yearly basis. The shop is open seven days.



## New & Notable

> **Best Cigar Prices (BCP)**, a leading Internet cigar retailer, has become the latest addition to Davidoff Cigars' Appointed Merchant network. The Drums, Penn.-based company will now carry all major Davidoff cigar lines reserved for those designated as Appointed Merchants, which number approximately 250 throughout the U.S. Davidoff reserves Appointed Merchant status exclusively for sellers with retail spaces, and BCP is slated to unveil the grand opening of its new brick and mortar retail cigar bar and lounge in late 2018 or early 2019.

BCP's forthcoming lounge will be a "destination" retail store located at their headquarters in northeastern Pennsylvania, featuring a bar, restaurant, cigar lounge, patio seating, and full access to their complete inventory of over 7,000 unique items from more than 600 top brands including premium cigars and accessories including cigar humidors, lighters, travel cases, and more.

"We're thrilled to strengthen our rela-

tionship with Davidoff and to be able to offer these iconic cigars to our customers," said Best Cigar Prices director of marketing Jeff Brown. "It's long overdue."

> **Riverhouse Cigar Bar**, Wenatchee, Wa., Celebrated its grand opening on June 24. The shop features a walk-in humidor and specializes on its selection of local craft beers on tap and wine, live music, and wine tastings. Extensive outdoor seating areas.

> **Ammar Karmi** has opened **Royale Cigar Lounge** in Columbus, Ohio on the city's west side following a four-year quest, reports the *Columbus Business Journal*. The retail shop and lounge includes a bar and food service with bright, open space that seats nearly 100 people with plenty of windows and patios in the front and back of the building. A custom 29-ton ventilation system clears the air in the building in seconds, says Karmi. The humidor focuses on mid- to high-end brands. The company is also a licensed tobacco wholesaler.

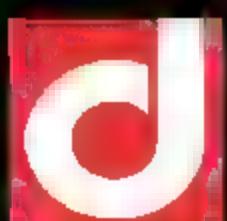
## Bits & Pieces

> **Massachusetts** Governor Charlie Baker signed a bill on July 27 that raises the legal age to buy tobacco and vaping products in the state from 18 currently to 21 effective January 2019. The bill also extends existing prohibitions on public smoking to include vaping products and bans the sale of tobacco products by any pharmacy, hospital, or other entity that offers health care services or that employs any licensed health care providers.

> The new legal age to purchase tobacco and vaping products in **Maine** became 21 effective July 1, as the state joined California, New Jersey, Hawaii, with age 21 tobacco products purchase laws in effect. Last year, state lawmakers overrode Republican Gov. Paul LePage's veto of the bill which prohibits the sale of tobacco products to individuals under 21-years-old. LePage had argued that adults who are old enough to serve in the military are old enough to decide whether to purchase and use tobacco products.

> A new **Gallup poll** reports that the U.S. smoking rate has fallen to 16 percent, the lowest level on record since the management consulting company first asked the question in 1944. According to the polling group, the smoking rate peaked at 45 percent in 1954.

# FAVORITES

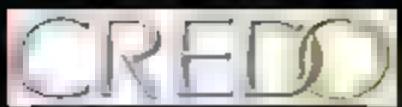


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## Scandinavian Tobacco Group Buys Peterson Pipe Tobacco Lines from Kapp & Peterson Ltd

Scandinavian Tobacco Group A/S of Søborg, Denmark closed a deal in July to acquire the entire premium pipe tobacco brand portfolio of Peterson Pipe Tobacco from Kapp & Peterson Limited, an Irish pipe and pipe tobacco manufacturer. The terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Peterson Pipe Tobacco has more than 150 years of storied heritage and is sold in 52 countries around the world. Within the Peterson brand portfolio are signature blends such as Sherlock Holmes, Old Dublin and Connoisseur's Choice, each recognized for their complexity and premium positioning. Against the backdrop of globally-shrinking volumes for the category as a whole, the Peterson range has delivered consistent volume and revenue growth since 2014.

Executive Vice President of Sales & Marketing in Scandinavian Tobacco Group,



Christian Hother Sørensen says: "M&A is part of the Scandinavian Tobacco Group DNA and we have a proven track record of achieving synergies when acquiring brands and businesses. We are excited about this small and interesting bolt-on acquisition in

our pipe tobacco category.

In Peterson Pipe Tobacco we are acquiring a sound portfolio of premium brands that will increase our offering to our consumers and which we can further develop whilst leveraging our sales and marketing competencies."

The acquisition strengthens Scandinavian Tobacco Group's position in the premium pipe tobacco segment, which has been growing in recent years. Additionally, the brand portfolio of Peterson Pipe Tobacco will further increase the group's presence in important pipe tobacco markets like Germany, the UK, the US and Asia.

## USPTO Denies Mombacho Cigars S.A. Trademark Cancellation Request; Trademark Dispute Continues

Mombacho Cigars S.A.'s petition requesting the cancellation of Tropical Tobacco's registration for the mark Mombacho for cigars on the grounds of abandonment came to an end on July 6 when the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) released its ruling.

Tropical Tobacco registered for the mark in 2003; Mombacho Cigars S.A. of Granada, Nicaragua, was founded in 2006 and holds the Mombacho trademark internationally. It sells the brand in select markets throughout North America, Europe, and Asia.

The USPTO dismissed the petition, filed in 2015, on the basis that Mombacho Cigars failed to prove that Tropical Tobacco did not sell bona fide quantities of Mombacho branded cigars for three consecutive years. According to legal documents filed with the petition, Tropical



Tobacco reported total sales of Mombacho cigars between 2012 and 2014 ranging from two to six boxes per year, compared to an average of about 200 boxes per year from 2005 to 2011.

In a statement, Mombacho Cigars noted that the ruling has no bearing on who can use the Mombacho trademark in commerce in the U.S., but rather it merely precludes the cancellation of Tropical Tobacco's Mombacho trademark. Mombacho Cigars says it brought the petition forward to clarify its position in the U.S. cigar marketplace and prevent consumer confusion on the use of Mombacho mark.

"This ruling has no impact on day-to-day operations and Mombacho Cigars continues to operate in the U.S. under its Mombacho flagship banner, as it does in 15 other countries around the world," the company said.

## Debonaire to Bring Distribution & Sales In-house

Debonaire House has announced that effective January 1, 2019, the boutique cigar company will begin distributing its own products in the United States, a function currently handled by Drew Estate, and directly manage all facets of its U.S. business operations including sales and marketing. The company has entered into the Cigars Direct partnership program with United Parcel Service (UPS), which will allow it to ship Debonaire Ultra premium and Indian Motorcycle cigars directly from their factory in the Dominican Republic to tobacconists and cigar retailers in the U.S.

"Working with the great team at Drew Estate over the past two and a half years has been a rewarding experience," said Philip S. Zanghi III, president of Debonaire House. "Debonaire House has now reached the point where we need to possess captive distribution for our Debonaire Ultra Premium, Indian Motorcycle and Debonaire House brands... [this] is an important milestone in the ongoing evolution of our company."

Drew Estate and Debonaire House will continue their partnership through the remainder of 2018 to help prepare for a successful launch of their new business operations after the first of the year.



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## ► Swedish Match to Acquire Sweden's Romakloster-Based Gotlands Snus AB

Swedish Match signed an agreement on July 26 to acquire a majority share in Gotlands Snus AB, a privately held Swedish company, located in Romakloster, Sweden, on the island of Gotland.

Founded in 2002, Gotlandssnus, with annual sales of approximately \$5.6 million, develops, produces, and sells both snus and nicotine-free products, with sales in Sweden, the U.S., Asia, and parts of Europe. The company sells popular brands such as Jakobsson's snus and Qvitt (nicotine and tobacco free pouches). Gotlandssnus produces approximately 4 million cans per year. The production facility and head office are located in Romakloster, in the heart of Gotland. The company has approximately 40 employees.



"Under the leadership of its founder, Henrik Jakobsson, Gotlandssnus has successfully grown its market presence through its portfolio of premium, high-quality snus and tobacco/nicotine-free products by leveraging the unique heritage of the island of Gotland," says Lars Dahlgren, president and CEO of Swedish Match. "We look forward to further developing this business together with Henrik and his team, and to enhancing our presence with production in Gotland."

Henrik Jakobsson will remain as the managing director of Gotlandssnus and also as a minority shareholder. The transaction is planned to be completed on August 22. Details of the purchase price have not been disclosed.

## ► Sutliff Tobacco to Host Inaugural CORPS Pre-Event Factory Tour

Sutliff Tobacco Company will host its first-ever "Traditional Pipe Tobacco; Journey to Market" tour at its Richmond, Va. headquarters and manufacturing facility on Friday, Sept. 28, 2018, a pre-show event in collaboration with the Conclave of Richmond Pipes Smokers (CORPS), which is bringing back its annual pipe smokers' expo in the form of CORPS 2018 Pipe Smokers' Gathering on Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018 at the Manchester Moose Lodge in North Chesterfield, Va.



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Sutliff guests will learn details about where tobacco comes from, how it is processed, blended, and packaged, exploring the number steps that tobacco undergoes once it has been harvested and ready for processing into pipe tobacco. Visitors will see the Sutliff pipe tobacco factory in action, test some new products, and make their own tin of tobacco during a blending seminar. A nominal \$1 fee will apply.

A complimentary food truck lunch will be provided.

Due to limited space, guests must register in advance at Eventbrite.com; visit the "Event Calendar" page at the CORPS website (ConclaveOfRichmondPipesmokers.org) for a direct registration link.

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# Personnel Moves

> **Klin Groupe LLC** has promoted **Erik Wentworth** to executive vice president of **Klin Tobacco**. Wentworth joined the company in 2013 and most recently served as director of sales. Chief operating officer Anthony Faletra said Wentworth has been responsible for spearheading the growth of all the brands in the portfolio and will bring "a great vision to the future of Klin Tobacco with exciting new blends and packaging."

> **Colibri** has promoted **Marty Faust** to vice president of the company's U.S. flame division. Faust joined the company in 2015 as chain account manager and most recently served as vice president of field sales. In a statement, Faust said the company's vision "is to offer the highest quality tobacco accessories wherever the consumer shops. We want to be the 'go to' brand for tobacco consumers." Faust brings to his new role over two decades of industry experience in sales and management at Altadis U.S.A., and before that at Havatampa Inc.

> **Crux Cigar** has hired **Roy MacLaren** as executive vice president of sales. Previously he held the same role at Avanti Cigar Co. Prior to that, MacLaren was general manager of Villiger Cigars North America, and v.p. of sales and marketing at Beach



## Villiger Cigars Opens Villiger Do Brasil, New Larger Cigar Factory in Brazil

Villiger Cigars continues its global expansion with the opening of its new factory in Brazil, Villiger Do Brasil, which translates from Portuguese to "Villiger of Brazil." Heinrich Villiger (right), chairman of the board of Villiger Cigars, was present at the opening of the new factory, marking the next evolution of a long relationship between Villiger Cigars and Brazilian tobacco, dating back to Villiger Cigars' founding in 1888.

Villiger Cigars has been importing Brazilian tobacco since its founding, which later led to establishing a Brazilian Villiger subsidiary in 1979, and factory named Charutos Tobajara Limitada. The name Tobajara is derived from a still-existing tobacco-growing Indian tribe in the Amazonas area.

## In Memoriam

### Eric Hanson, 45

Eric Hanson, founder of and executive chairman of Klin Groupe and Hammer+Sickle brands, passed away unexpectedly on Friday, June 8th, 2018.



Anthony Faletra c.e.o. of Kline Groupe, said in a statement, "The family and company is saddened by this tragic and unexpected loss. Klin will continue to follow the path on both sides of the business that Eric paved for them. He was one of the most innovative people in the industry and it is our job, pleasure and honor to follow this path that he laid for us."

Hanson was born in Lawrence, Mass., January 26, 1973, and was a graduate of Chelmsford High School and American University, attaining a Master's Degree in Corporate Public Communications. He founded the Klin Groupe, a spirits and wine company which later expanded into cigars. He created and introduced Russian-made Hammer+Sickle Vodka to the U.S. market, followed by wine, cigar, and rum products under the umbrella of the Klin Groupe in Lowell, Mass.



The opening of the larger and more modern Villiger do Brasil factory marks the replacement of the company's previous factory, but maintains its location in the same area near the second-largest city in the state of Bahia, Feira de Santana. The Brazilian Villiger subsidiary has also changed to Villiger do Brasil Limitada.

Heinrich Villiger is very passionate about Brazilian tobacco and made a point to partake in the opening celebrations of the new factory. Currently, the Villiger do Brasil factory produces only Brazilian puros, to include the Villiger San'Doro Maduro, along with European exclusive brands Villiger Celebration, and the Corrida.

"Brazilian tobacco holds a special place in my heart," said Villiger. "My grandparents saw the value in Brazilian tobacco when they began Villiger Cigars as very small operation in 1888, and we have continued the tradition of using this very special tobacco in many of our brands. We feel that the hard working and passionate team at Villiger do Brasil will help us increase the awareness of Brazilian tobacco worldwide."

Villiger Sons Limited was established in 1888 by Jean Villiger in the small town of Pfeffikon, Switzerland, where Villiger remains headquartered to this day. The company manufactures and sells more than 1.5 billion cigars annually, world-wide. Today, under the leadership of Heinrich Villiger, the company prides itself in its commitment to quality, in all their products made in many countries around the globe.

> **Quality Importers**, ■ Weston, Fla.-based cigar accessory manufacturer and distributor and parent company of Xikar, Inc., has announced several executive appointments.

**James "Jimmy" Muido** joined the company as v.p. of product design and marketing in July. Muido brings over 20 years of category experience to his new position, having previously served as creative director and marketing director at Colibri Group since 2009, and prior to that as director of creative services at Colibri/ST Dupont since 1997.

**Leslie Mann** joined the company ■ June as executive vice president, bringing decades of category experience to the position. Previously, Mann served as executive vice president of sales and marketing at Colibri, a position he held for over 10 years. Prior to joining Colibri in 2008, Mann served in the same capacity at S.T. Dupont, Paris, ■ position he held for nine years, and before that as national accounts and sales manager at A.T. Cross Company.

**Fabian Barrantes** joined Quality Importers in April as marketing director, bringing 14 years of related experience to the position. Barrantes previously



Muido



Barrantes

served as director of marketing at La Galera Cigars and its importing and distribution division, IndianHead Cigars, a position he held since March 2015. Prior to that, Barrantes served as director of marketing at Villiger Cigars North America, Boutique Blends, and Oliveros Cigars.

> **Villiger Cigars North America** announced that **Hector J. Pires** has been promoted to the position of national sales manager. Pires previously served as south eastern territory manager, having joined the company in 2016, bringing with him ■ decade of hospitality management experience and personal tobacco passion.

**Roger Peña** has joined the company to fill the role of south east regional sales manager. Born in the Dominican Republic, Peña has worked in the health-care field for a number of years while also playing semi-pro baseball in a number of independent leagues. In joining Villiger Cigars, he realizing his goal of working in the tobacco industry, building upon his personal passion for cigars and the cigar lifestyle.



Pires

> **PDR Cigars** has promoted **Richie Otero** to director of sales. Otero joined the company in 2017 as Florida sales representative, a role he previously held at Caldwell Cigar Co.

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## In Memoriam

### Philip Segal III, 60

Philip Segal III, founder of Havana Phil's Cigar Company in Greensboro, died July 18, 2018 at age 60.

Segal, a Greensboro native, opened the original Havana Phil's cigar shop in 2010, specializing in handmade premium cigars and accessories, including pipes, pipe tobacco, and other gift items.

In 2014, the store became one of the few Davidoff Appointed Merchants located in the southeast region of U.S.A., and in 2015 Segal was honored by Davidoff of Geneva U.S.A. as the inaugural recipient of the 2015 Davidoff Golden Band Awards Best New Appointed Merchant.

In 2016, Segal moved the retail business to its current location two miles away, transforming a former local icon, Anton's Restaurant, into an upscale cigar shop featuring a 2,000 square foot private membership Davidoff Lounge, bringing to Greensboro the sophisticated modern design with industrial touches characteristic of Davidoff's global lounge concept. Segal entirely refurbished the building while retaining many of the former restaurant's distinctive architectural elements in the retail area.





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## ► Calendar

**SEPTEMBER 21-23, 2018**

**InterTabac/InterSupply Dortmund**

Westfalenhallen Dortmund, Germany. 34th International Trade Fair Contact: Nina Kapitan, Tel: +(49)(231) 1204-586, Fax: +(49)(231) 1204-678, Email: mina.kapitan@westfalenhallen.de, Web: [www.inter-tabac.de](http://www.inter-tabac.de).

**SEPTEMBER 21-23, 2018**

**19th Greater Kansas City Pipe & Tobacco Show**

Argosy Casino Hotel Spa ■ Casino, Riverside, Mo. Exhibit hall, smoking tent, CIPC pipe smoking contest, pipe care and refurbishing clinic, silent auction, 9th annual carving contest. Contact: Greater Kansas City Pipe Club, Email: [admin@gkcpipeclub.com](mailto:admin@gkcpipeclub.com), Web: [gkcpipeclub.com](http://gkcpipeclub.com).

**SEPTEMBER 29, 2018**

**CORPS 2018 Pipe Smokers' Gathering**

Manchester Moose Lodge, North Chesterfield, Va., Dealer tables, \$35. Public Admission \$5, CORPS members free. Smoking permitted; food, coffee, drinks and cash bar on site. Free parking. Pre-show events on Friday, Sept. 28

include Inaugural Factory Tour of Sutliff Tobacco (registration required) and dinner at Extra Billy's BBQ patio, pipe smoking permitted.

**OCTOBER 7-10, 2018**

**NACS Show 2018**

Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev.

Convenience and fuel retailing's premier industry event, attended by more than 23,500 industry stakeholders from around the world. Contact: NACS, Alexandria, Va., Web: [nacsonline.com](http://nacsonline.com).

**NOVEMBER 1-3, 2018**

**CAA Annual Meeting**

The Breakers, Palm Beach, Fla. Annual meeting of the Cigar Association of America. Contact: CAA, Washington, D.C., Tel: (202) 223-8204, Web: [cigarassociation.org](http://cigarassociation.org).

**NOVEMBER 10-11, 2018**

**10th Annual West Coast Pipe Show**

Palace Station Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nev. Hosted by Steve O'Neill and Marty Pulvers. Smoking friendly exhibit hall with adjacent lounge with full bar. For table reservations and information, contact: Steve O'Neill, Email: [steve@westcoastpipeshow.com](mailto:steve@westcoastpipeshow.com), Web: [westcoastpipeshow.com](http://westcoastpipeshow.com).



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### American Cigar Accessories Acquired by Wood Projections

Wood Projections, Inc. of Cutler Bay, Fla.—a manufacturer of commercial display humidors, cigar lockers, walk-in humidors, and all kinds of fixtures for the cigar industry—announced it has acquired Jasper, Georgia-based American Cigar Accessories, the manufacturer of the HumidiFresh humidification system for cigar cabinets, and the supplier of the Cezio and Maxifogger humidifiers for walk-in humidors that was founded in 1994. The company provides "best value" products to humidify cigars in retail stores and manufacturing settings.

In a statement announcing the acquisition, Wood Projections said, "Our goal is to continue providing customers with excellent and reliable humidification options at a great price, and offer our own customer the best machine for their humidors and cigar room."



The American Cigar Accessories range of humidification equipment can be viewed at [amhumidifiers.com](http://amhumidifiers.com). Customers can contact the company by phone at (786) 250-4665, or toll-free at (800) 416-3611.

For information on Wood Projections' range of humidors and store fixtures, visit the company's Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter pages, or see contact information below.

**Wood Projections, Inc.**, 19200 SW 106 Ave., #20, Miami, Fla. 33157, Toll-free: (877) 971-9663, Tel: (305) 971-7883, Fax: (305) 232-9108, Email: [info@woodprojections.com](mailto:info@woodprojections.com), Web: [woodprojections.com](http://woodprojections.com).

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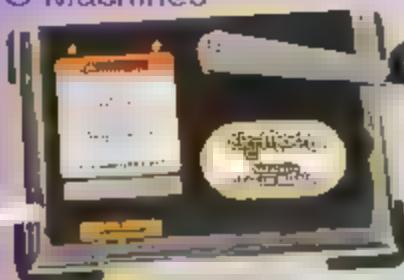
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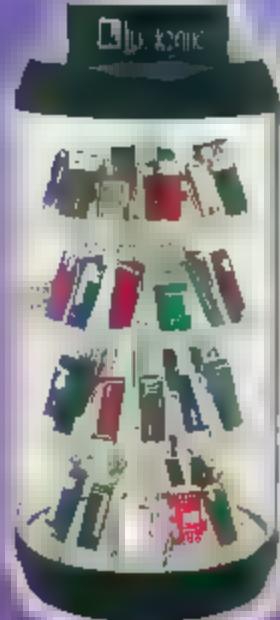
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Agio Cigars was already one of the leading cigar companies in Europe when it opened its craft factory in San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic.

## Procigar Festival 2018

# Royal Agio Cigars Joins Dominican Association

The 11th annual festival celebrating the art of handmade Dominican cigars welcomed a new member to its ranks, one making new efforts to earn a greater piece of the U.S. market. ➤ **BY E. EDWARD HOYT**

One of Europe's most prominent cigar manufacturers, Royal Agio Cigars, was officially introduced as the newest member of Procigar, the Association of Dominican Cigar Manufacturers, during the annual Procigar Festival held February 18–23, 2018 in the Dominican Republic. The company has been investing heavily in the U.S. market, having established Royal Agio Cigars U.S.A. in Bradenton, Fla. earlier this year to handle all of its own distribution and sales functions.

Royal Agio Cigars said in a statement that becoming an official member of Procigar marks an important milestone for the 114-year-old cigar maker on its quest to more significantly contribute to helping further advance key global cigar industry efforts by working more closely with local manufacturers in the Dominican Republic. As a new member, Agio also participated as an upper echelon gold sponsor in this year's annual Procigar festival.

Established in 1904, Agio has a long and successful history of crafting and

manufacturing premium blend cigars and continues to be a family owned and operated cigar company, with global headquarters located in Duizel, Holland. Agio made the decision in 1990 to invest directly in the Dominican Republic by building a factory dedicated to the production of boutique premium handmade cigars. Located in San Pedro de Macoris, Agio's factory produces high-quality, handcrafted premium cigars including Balmoral Anejo XO, Balmoral Royal Selection, and its newest release, San Pedro de Macoris.

"We work with a very small, dedicated team to create our unique premium cigars," says Francisco Batista, Master Blender and General Manager of Agio Caribbean Tobacco Company. "The carefully-selected pairs working for us in San Pedro de Macoris take great pride in handcrafting our cigars and are true artisans in the craft."

"With Agio becoming an official member of Procigar, I feel an even deeper connection to the local cigar community

and I look forward to sharing knowledge and working more closely together with other manufacturers to help elevate what is already world-leading cigar quality."

Procigar was founded in 1992 by a small group of dedicated, world-class premium cigar manufacturers. The association has primarily focused on protecting and promoting the Dominican Republic, a country devoted to the cultivation of tobacco and the leading exporter of premium cigars worldwide.

"For Agio, it has always been very important to be actively involved in the communities where our company conducts business," said Boris Wintermans, the fourth generation c.e.o. of Royal Agio Cigars, from the company's Dominican factory. "We have had a presence here for nearly three decades now and feel very much like the Dominican Republic is our second home. As a member of Procigar, we plan to actively engage our world-class Dominican cigar manufacturer neighbors and local industry suppliers to more directly contribute to helping advance the organization's efforts. Given Agio's strong worldwide footprint, we believe we can also offer significant contributions on a global level."

Last year, the Dominican Republic exported 118.5 million premium cigars to the United States, up 2.5 percent from 115.6 million in 2016—nearly identical to the 2.4 percent increase in total premium cigar imports to the U.S. from the eight key supplier countries. For the second consecutive year, the Dominican Republic has ranked second in premium cigar exports to the U.S., behind Nicaragua which exported 148.3 million cigars to the U.S. in 2017—a margin of 25 percent, up from ■ 16 percent margin in 2016.

## PROCIGAR FESTIVAL 2018

Procigar member manufacturers hosted over 400 attendees at this year's festival, ranging from suppliers, retailers, and consumers from more than 20 countries, all gathering to celebrate the country's

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Clockwise from top left: Abe Flores, founder of PDR Cigars at his factory in Tamboril; Ernesto Perez-Carrillo, founder of Tabacalera La Alianza; cigars aging at Tabacalera La Palma, maker of La Galera cigars; curing barns at Chateau de la Fuente; preparing harvested tobacco leaves for curing at the General Cigar Dominicana's farm in Mao; at La Aurora Cigars, President Guillermo Leon, tour guide Eugenio Polanco, and Master Blender Manuel Inoa; Siegfried Maruschke of Tabacalera Garcia tobacco supplier Jose Mendez Cia.

premium cigar traditions of its leading manufacturers. Hundreds of additional guests and local dignitaries attended the evening social dinners, the gala closing dinner and charity auction in particular.

The festival started leisurely at the Casa de Campo Resort in La Romana, where attendees enjoyed beach time, a cigar seminar, and a tour of Tabacalera de Garcia, the biggest cigar factory of the world. The main festivities continued for three more days in Santiago, the heart of the Dominican Republic's premium cigar industry. There, attendees could select from guided field and factory tours of La Flor Dominicana (La Canela), De Los Reyes Cigars (Navarrete), General Cigar Co. (Mao), Tabacalera Palma (Tamboril), Davidoff Cigars (Jicomé), as well as the factories of La Aurora and PDR Cigars. Also offered were tours of José Méndez & Co. (La Canela), a principal tobacco grower and processor for Tabacalera de Garcia, and the Chateau de la Fuente tobacco plantation and the adjacent House of Dreams and Cigar Family Charitable Foundation.

Attendees also had the option to participate in number of other leisure activities while in Santiago, including the 8th annual Procigar Poker Tournament with proceeds benefiting local charitable institutions; a beach day at the Gansevoort Hotel in Puerto Plata; or a visit to the Monte Alegre Coffee plantation in Juncalito. Also, for the very first time, an official qualification tournament for the Cigar Smoking World Championship (CSWC) 2018 took place during the festival. New this year, Procigar partnered with El Catador, a Dominican importer and distributor of fine wines, to host a wine and cigar pairing and tasting experience. Professional sommeliers and master cigar blenders guided the audience through two pairings: Marqués de Riscal Reserva with the La Galera Gavillero Perfecto from Tabacalera Palma, and the Finca Torrea by Marqués de Riscal with the Saga Short Tales VI Sixth Element from De Los Reyes Cigars.

At each evening's social event dinner, guests received a carefully curated sampler box of cigars, in which each Procigar member presented a cigar that was either new, a limited release, or perhaps even specially for the festival. Often the new releases represent one of the first times that a cigar is sampled publicly.

At the traditional welcome dinner held at the gardens of Teatro del Cibao, the sampler contained: Partagas X from General Cigar Co., Davidoff Year of the Snake, Double Chateau Fuente Rosado, La Galera Gavillero Perfecto from Tabacalera Palma, Gurkha Ghost Blade from PDR Cigars, La Flor Dominicana Factory Press, Quesada Limited Edition 2018, La Aurora Hors D'Age, VegaFina Gran Reserva 20 Aniversario from Tabacalera García, Saga Short Tales Tomo VI The Sixth Element El Tabaco from De Los Reyes Cigars, and E.P. Carrillo Core Plus Natural Encantos from Tabacalera La Alianza.

At the welcome white attire dinner held at Santiago's Monumento a los Héroes de la Restauració, attendees enjoyed a birds-eye view of the city of Santiago and received an 11-cigar sampler containing E.P. Carrillo New Wave Reserva Robusto, Quesada Reserva Privada Barber Pole, Macanudo Gold Label from General Cigar Dominicana, Montecristo Artisan Series Batch 1 from Tabacalera de García, La Aurora Preferido Double Barrel Aged, El Trovador Diadama from PDR Cigars, La Galera 1936 Box Pressed from Tabacalera Palma, Reserva Especial Toro from La Flor Dominicana, Davidoff Master Blender Selection No. 1, Don Carlos Eye of the Shark, and Saga Short Tales III LIV from De Los Reyes Cigars.

At the gala closing dinner at the Centro Espanol private Spanish Club, the evening's sampler featured New Wave Connecticut El Decano by E.P. Carrillo; Montecristo Artisan Series Batch II; Nat Sherman 1930 Corona; Saga Vault Edition II; Macanudo Inspirado Black Toro; Arturo Fuente Don Carlos Eye of the Shark; La Aurora Preferidos Platinum Cameroon; La Galera Habano Cabeza Caracol, Davidoff Limited Edition 2018 Year of the Dog Churchill, La Flor Dominicana La Volcado, Flores y Rodriguez Connecticut Valley Reserve Azul Figurado.

The festival culminated with an annual auction of one-of-kind humidors and cigar lots, among other items, with all proceeds benefiting the Voluntariado de Jesús con los Niños and the Hospicio San Vicente de Paúl, non-profit organizations helping ill children and impoverished elders. This year's auction raised \$135,000.

The 2019 Procigar festival will be held February 17-22. Visit [procigar.org](http://procigar.org). ■

## Davidoff Cigars Debuts New Chefs Edition



Davidoff is marking its 50th anniversary this year and to help celebrate, the Swiss company has unveiled a second Chefs Edition cigar. On the day after the 2018 Procigar festival ended, Davidoff hosted a small group of journalists at the company's farm in Jicome. There, in the middle of the tobacco field, the company presented a tasting brunch and the chance to meet and talk with three of the chefs involved in this latest edition.

Davidoff released its first Chefs Edition in 2016 and the limited run quickly sold out. The second edition was planned as part of the 50th celebration and was different from the first one because it included chefs from the United States, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom. The work on this edition took many months because of the diversity of the chef's palates.

Sam Reuter, Davidoff's senior manager of product innovation, was tasked with getting the chef's opinions and then translating them to Eladio Diaz, Davidoff's master blender. Reuter says it was different with these chefs because when you talked about pepper, they would be more precise, citing "Sichuan pepper."

In the end, the Michelin rated chefs who are all cigar smokers—Thomas Keller from New York, Alvin Leung from Hong Kong, and Shaun Rankin from the United Kingdom—finally settled on a size and blend. Those cigars were passed out to the media at the brunch while the chefs explained what they were looking for. Leung said, "We wanted something that you can enjoy right away. Not wait for the first inch or first half. We wanted something that started with a bang." Rankin noted the cigar also had complexity, "you could pick out the Sichuan pepper, the cocoa notes, the essence of coffee and the spices as well we sat around talked about the ginger and the aroma."

Leung, added, "It is a fantastic cigar, it is a rare cigar. Use it for special occasions, use it to celebrate, use it to mourn, pair it with yourself. Don't make things complicated."

The chefs all agreed the new Chefs Edition would pair well with an 18 year old Macallan, with Keller also suggesting rum or tequila. "I rediscovered it about 10 years ago and have been enjoying some of the Extra Añejo," said Keller. —Frank Seltzer

Above (l. to r.): Celebrity chefs Alvin Leung, Thomas Keller, and Shaun Rankin, the team tapped to collaborate with Davidoff to help create the second Davidoff Chef's Edition.





## 2018 IPCPR Convention & Trade Show: Mixed Signals on New Cigar Launches

While the staged roll-out of FDA's cigar regulation plan faces temporary delays as the fight grinds on, it's been "innovation as usual" for some cigar makers, but time to hold back for others. >**E. EDWARD HOYT III**

For those who believe in omens, the 86th Annual Convention & International Trade Show of the International Premium Cigar & Pipe Retailers Association (IPCPR), held July 10-13, 2018 at the Las Vegas Convention Center and the adjacent Westgate Resort & Casino, seemed to be tossing an unusually high concentration of curve balls at the premium tobacco industry just as it was attempting to settle in for five days of trade conferences, seminars, and an expansive merchandise buying show.

An apparent outbreak of norovirus — a.k.a the stomach flu—at the Westgate sent some guests scrambling and prompted association officials to move pre-show events that were scheduled for conference facilities there to the Las Ve-

gas Convention Center instead. Among those events was General Cigar Company's big opening night CAO Nicaragua bash, a massive undertaking to reconfigure in a new space.

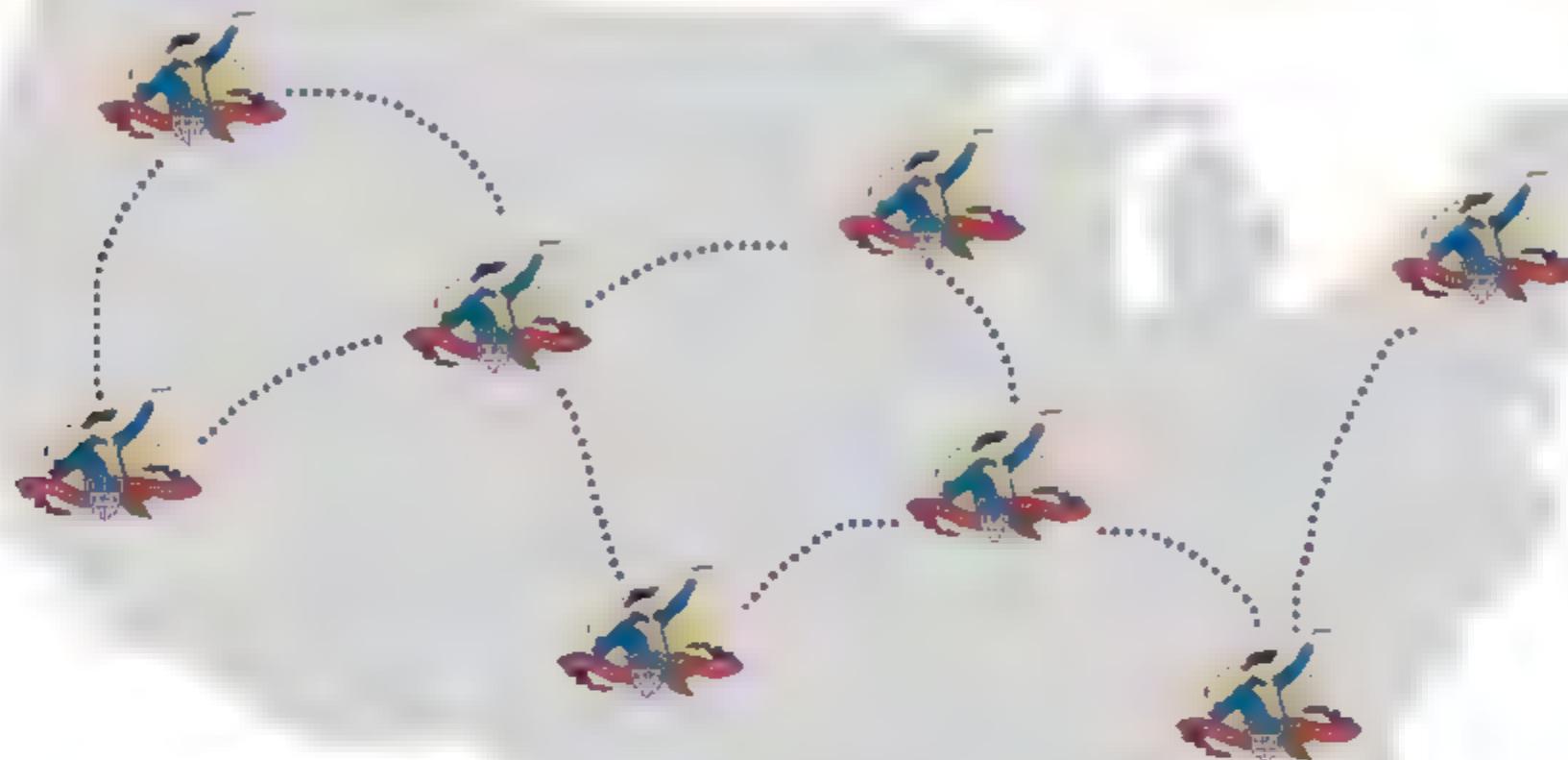
Then, an early morning electric fire in the exhibit hall on the second day of the show delayed the opening by four hours, as facility crews replaced water-soaked carpets and the thankfully small number of affected exhibitors cleaned up their own water damage from the sprinklers.

But, as the saying states, the show must go on, and on it did, with extended show hours instituted to help make up for lost buying time, and evening social events delayed accordingly. The omens were proven wrong, as it was business as usual thanks to fast-changing gears.

Even attendance numbers, as reported by the IPCPR after the show, were up, if only by about 3.3 percent. The association reported that 778 retail stores were in attendance, up from 752 in 2017, but clocking in at slightly less than the five-average of retail store participation, which stands at 796 stores. In all, there were 2,054 attendee badges roaming show. Total participation during the five-day event, including all exhibitors, exceeded 5,300 people in all.

While some product manufacturers displayed product packaging that was fully compliant with U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) health warning label requirements that had been set to go into effect August 10, 2018, most displayed "label-ready" packaging with designs that allowed space for warning placement. As it turns out, just five days before the show, a federal judge blocked the FDA from enforcing the requirements for cigars and pipe tobacco until an appeals court rules on whether the rules are constitutional. U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta in Washington, D.C. issued an injunction on July 5 at the request of trade groups including the IPCPR that will now delay enforcement of warning requirements. For many companies, the delay is largely moot, as the changeover for packaging has been long

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- George 'Shorty' Koebel, Owner of Havana Connections in Richmond, Virginia

*"Our businesses need all of the marketing exposure possible, and with CRA appealing to a national audience, this is well worth the cost. I also like the fact that we can have some input on issues affecting the industry."*

- Joel Schwartz, Owner of Ford & Haig Tobacconists in Scottsdale, Arizona

*"This can be a great way to highlight store events, especially when new cigars are coming onto the market. When the manufacturers are in our shop, this can be a way to reach a broader audience than just those that walk into the store, or that we see on a regular basis."*

- Julie Neumann, Owner of Cigars & More in Libertyville, Illinois



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## ISLAND LIFESTYLE IMPORTERS TAPS VENTURA CIGAR FOR DISTRIBUTION, SALES, & MARKETING

Island Lifestyle Importers announced an exclusive marketing and distribution relationship with Ventura Cigar Company shortly before the 2018 IPCPR Trade Show, where the official kick-off took place. Ventura will be responsible for the national marketing and distribution of the Tommy Bahama brand of luxury cigar accessories and Island Lifestyle Aged Reserve line of cigars.

Ventura Cigar Company's national sales team will build upon the existing network of authorized Tommy Bahama cigar accessory dealers across the country. In addition, parent company Phillips & King International will assist with internal wholesale marketing efforts of the Tommy Bahama and Island Lifestyle brands. Both Ventura Cigar Company and Phillips & King are wholly owned subsidiaries of Kretek International.

"This is the perfect alignment of strengths," stated Rick Louis, c.e.o. of Island Lifestyle Importers. "We design and manufacture exceptionally high quality products that encourage the relaxing enjoyment of the finer things in life, while Ventura and Phillips & King bring decades of experience and strong relationships within the tobacconist community. Together...this will establish Tommy Bahama and Island Lifestyle as one of the preeminent lifestyle brands within the cigar industry."

Michael Giannini, general manager of Ventura Cigar Company, added, "Tommy Bahama and Island Lifestyle are well-known brands that jive well with Ventura Cigar's Southern California lifestyle. We've long-admired their attention to detail and the top-notch cigars and accessories they've been crafting. We're pleased to be their partners and look forward to successfully growing their presence in the cigar industry."

Island Lifestyle Importers has been the exclusive designer and manufacturer of Tommy Bahama luxury cigar accessories since 2010 and the exclusive world-wide licensee of Tommy Bahama branded accessories since 2015. These accessories are known for their innovative designs, cutting edge technology, and island theme inspired art. The Island Lifestyle Aged Reserve line of cigars has received positive reviews and consistent 90+ ratings from cigar industry media outlets.

and costly to meet the defunct deadline. Other media, such as magazines or web pages, can more readily be changed up on the fly, and if you don't have to bombard customers yet with warnings, many have chosen to hold off.

During the annual breakfast meeting, held July 14, 2018, association members nominated and elected two candidates to serve three year terms on the IPCPR board of directors, starting on the 2018-2019 board: Harris Saunders, Cigars & More, Birmingham, Al., and Randy Silverman, Klafters, Inc., New Castle, Pa.

IPCPR board secretary Scott Regina of Emerson's Cigars, Virginia Beach, Va., spoke about new benefits available to IPCPR members, starting with affinity programs that have been redesigned to provide key services at competitive, re-



full exhibit days. One topic previewed for members at the show was the new Tobacconists Insights Program, providing retail members access to "valuable information and perspectives that will produce better business outcomes."

Each year, the IPCPR staff recognizes one or more of its members as distinguished leaders in the premium cigar industry. In announcing the 2018 winner, Greg Zimmerman, IPCPR treasurer, chair of the state legislative affairs committee, and owner of The Tobacco Company, Lemoyne, Pa., noted that the IPCPR's honoree "has gone above and beyond to protect the premium tobacco industry from legislative threats, to engage and educate other retailers in their state."

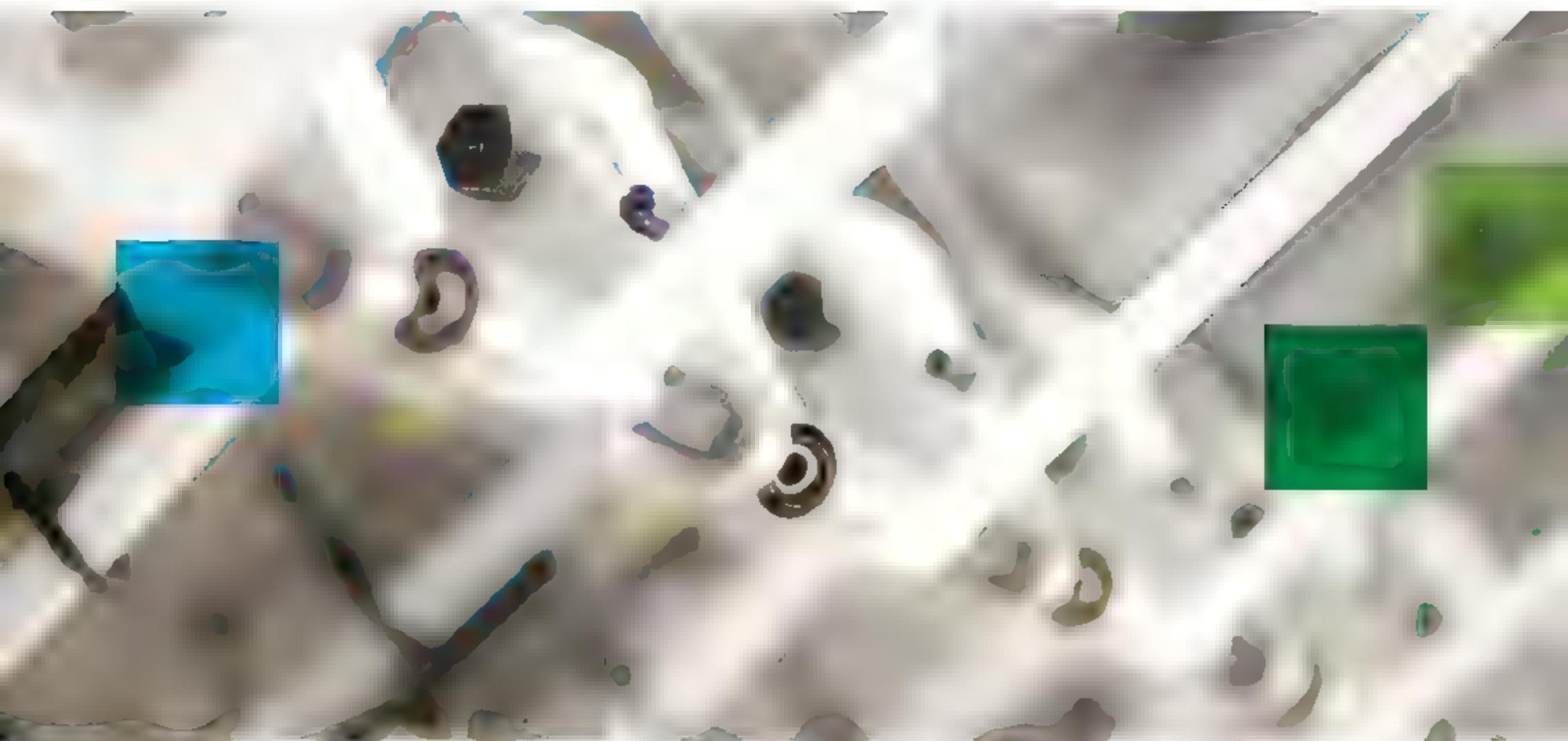
Zimmerman then presented IPCPR's 2018 StepUp Award to Todd LaScola of Havana Cigar Club, Warwick, R.I. "Todd is being recognized for his outstanding leadership in Rhode Island," Zimmerman explained. "This year, he worked directly with the IPCPR staff to oppose two harmful provisions in a government budget proposal. Todd has personally engaged tobacconists across his state and conducted many legislative meetings on behalf of the premium tobacco industry. Todd was instrumental in protecting the 50-cent tax cap and killing a stringent and expensive distribution requirement that would have put many tobacconists in Rhode Island out of business."

This year's keynote speaker at the annual meeting breakfast was decorated Navy SEAL and author of *Lone Survivor*, Marcus Luttrell, who recounted the wrenching tale of a 2005 mission in a remote part of Afghanistan with three other Navy SEALs to neutralize a leading Taliban member. The mission turned tragic when SEAL team was ambushed under heavy firepower by dozens of Taliban fighters. Luttrell was the only American survivor, a story that combines an unfathomable will to endure and the help of an Afghan herder.

Following a two-year run at Las Vegas Convention Center, the 2019 IPCPR Convention & Trade Show will return to the Sands Expo and Convention Center, adjacent to the Venetian and Palazzo hotels, from Saturday, June 29 through Tuesday, July 2, 2019. Visit [IPCPR.org](http://IPCPR.org) for full details.

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## 2018 Best in Show Exhibitor Awards

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Best Medium Exhibitor (6-10 booth)

**CIGAR OASIS**



Best Large Exhibitor (11-25 booth)

**SCANDINAVIAN TOBACCO GROUP**



> Awards were presented by IPCPR executive director Scott Pearce and board member Ken Neumann of Neumann's Cigars & More.

Best Small Exhibitor (1-5 booth)

**MY LUCKY CIGAR**



Best Medium Exhibitor (6-10 booth)

**ROYAL AGIO U.S.A.**



Best Large Exhibitor (11-25 booth)

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**IPCPR 2018 TRADE SHOW  
NEW MERCHANDISE**

La Sonrisa Cigars, Phoenix, Ariz. ([lasonrisacigars.com](http://lasonrisacigars.com)), a boutique brand of small batch Nicaraguan cigars produced at the company's own factory, La Sonrisa Cigars, S.A. in Granada, Nicaragua, and imported by parent company AZCO Importers LLC, unveiled its latest line, **El Profesor**, which honors late company co-founder Wally Stealey, a third-generation Colorado rancher, political strategist, and political science professor. The medium-to full-bodied limited edition cigar is rolled from a blend of Nicaraguan fillers

with an Indonesian binder and a shade grown Ecuadorian Connecticut wrapper with a maduro (Ecuadorian habano) pigtail head. It is offered in a single 6 x 52 toro size, in either 9- or 18-count boxes



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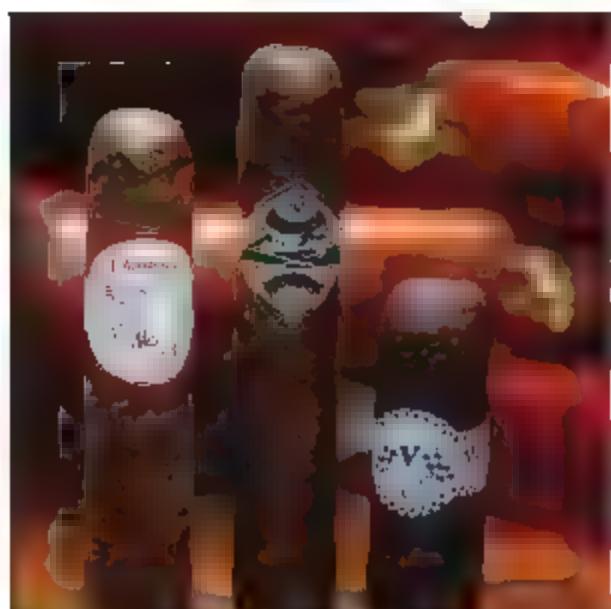


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LA AURORA BARREL AGED BY KARL MALONE**



and retails for \$12.95. Production is limited to 1,000 boxes.

Stealey was one of company co-founder Tom Hocking's college professors over 40 years ago and became a close friend and mentor; they and their spouses shared a penchant for travel and fine cigars. Following a number of visits to Nicaragua starting in the late 1990s, Stealey and his wife, Sharon, bought a farm in Grenada, bringing the group of friends even closer to their appreciation of fine tobaccos and cigars. When Hocking's wife Charlotte lost her life in 2014, the friends turned to master blender Silvio David Martinez to create a mild cigar blended "for women"



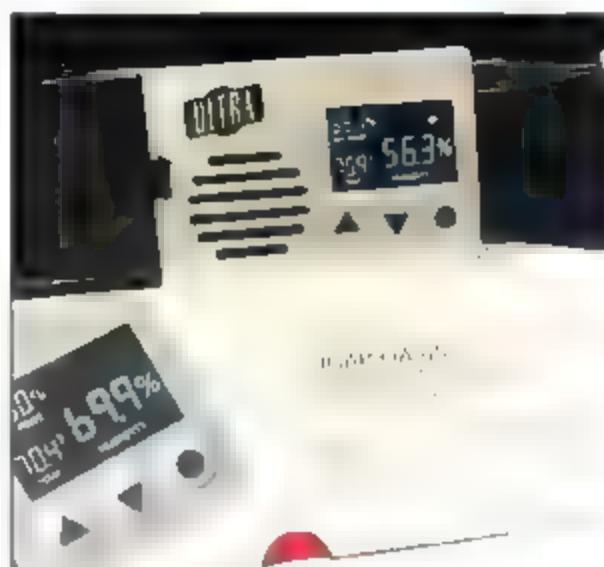
in Charlotte's honor, rolled in petite corona, corona, and robusto sizes from premium aged Nicaraguan tobaccos, Indonesian Sumatra binder, and a shade grown Connecticut seed Ecuadorian wrapper, retailing from \$6.75 to \$7.50 each. **Charlotte's** blend was joined by **Wally's** blend, which is mild-medium in strength, offering more powerful flavor and rolled in Churchill, toro, torpedo, robust, and Liga Especial sizes from Nicaraguan filler, Indonesian Sumatra binder, and Habana Criollo wrapper from Jalapa, retailing from \$8 to \$8.75 each. Finally, a third blend, **Victory**, is a mild, earthy but peppery blend with a shade grown Connecticut seed Ecuadorian wrapper offered a single Corto Gorda (4 1/2 x 54) size, ideal for a quick smoke, special occasions, or just to celebrate life's small "victories."

The family of three cigars was named **La Sonrisa** (the smile), in memory of Charlotte's "radiant smile," says Hocking, and was launched commercially at the 2017 IPCPR Trade Show.

The House of Lucky Cigar, Hallandale Beach, Fla. ([luckycigar.com](http://luckycigar.com)), showcased its extensive collection of premium, long filler cigars, hand made



in Nicaragua from Central American and Mexican tobaccos. The result is a collection of cigars ranging from mild, to medium and full body in Habano, maduro, Connecticut, and barber pole wrappers, including **Pequeños**, **Clásico**, **Especial Box Press**, **Liga Perfecta**, **Habano Esteli**, **Maduro Original**, and **Twister**. In addition, the company offers **Lucky Flavors Cigars** are hand-rolled in the Dominican Republic from Cuban-seed Dominican fillers and Indonesian wrapper for a smooth, mild and mellow, taste with a pleasant aroma. They are available in a 5 x 42 size in a dozen flavors, packed in 24-count boxes.



Cigar Oasis LLC, Farmdale, N.Y. ([cigaroasis.com](http://cigaroasis.com)), released its updated **Cigar Oasis 3.0** line of electronic humidifiers (Excel, Ultra, Plus, and Magna) now featuring built-in WiFi with Smart Humidor capability and a new app for remote monitoring and control; enlarged back-lit LCD display with humidity/temperature readings; low water alerts and WiFi connectivity status; user-friendly CapSense buttons for humidity setting; updated colors, design, and feel; and streamlined electronic ribbon/USB ports for stronger and more seamless connection. Smart Humidor legacy users will have full free access to the new app while new users will receive a free trial with subscription offers as low as \$1.40/month thereafter for access to app features including live humidity/temperature reports, one year of history, low water alerts, and humidity set point adjustment.



Royal Agio Cigars U.S.A., Bradenton, Fla. ([agiocigars.com](http://agiocigars.com)), debuted several new blends and lines, all handcrafted at the company's boutique Royal Agio cigar factory in San Pedro de Macorís, Dominican Republic.

The Balmoral Añejo XO product line-up has expanded with the release of **Añejo XO Connecticut** and **Añejo XO Oscuro**. A direct follow-up to the highly-regarded Balmoral Añejo 18, which featured an 18-year-old Brazilian Arapiraca wrapper, the Balmoral Añejo XO Connecticut blend is finished with a shade-grown wrapper from the Connecticut River Valley and provides a "luxuriously creamy experience" with complex notes of vanilla, toasted caramel, and white pepper, according to Agio Cigars. Balmoral Añejo XO Oscuro is finished with a San Andres wrapper, offering a rich experience with complex notes of dark chocolate, espresso and black pepper. Both blends finish with a smooth, underlying natural sweetness. Both new blends will be offered in the same vitolas as the current Balmoral Añejo XO, ranging from \$8.50 to \$11.25 each: Torpedo Mk52 (6 1/4 x 52), Gran Toro (6 x 52), Rothschild Masivo (5 x 55), Corona (5 7/8 x 42), and Petit Robusto FT (4 1/4 x 48).



**San Pedro de Macoris** is a new handmade line specifically crafted to deliver "extraordinary quality at an accessible, everyday price," named after the hard-working town of San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic, where Royal Agio's handmade cigar factory is located. Each cigar incorporates original Cuban seed Piloto Ligero tobacco filler and a high grade binder to ensure a complex and distinct premium cigar experience, and is offered in two distinct blend lines. The **San Pedro de Macoris Ecuador** blend is finished with



a shade-grown Ecuador Connecticut wrapper and provides a "creamy and medium-bodied experience with complex notes of vanilla and white chocolate, with a hint of peppery spice." **San Pedro de Macoris Brazil** is finished



with a sun-grown Brazilian Arapiraca wrapper and offers a medium-bodied smoke with "complex notes of cacao, dry nuts and coffee beans." Each blend is offered in three vitolas, presented in 20-count cedar boxes: Perla (4 1/8 x 40), \$4.75 each; Corona (5 7/8 x 42), \$5 and Robusto (5 1/8 x 52), \$5.50 each.

**Dueto** is Agio's first handmade cigar blend released under the new collaboration-based **Balmoral Serie Signaturas (Signature Series)** platform. For this first release, Boris Wintermans teamed up with Ernesto Pérez-Carrillo of Tabacalera La Alianza to create a special, one-of-a-kind experience based on the intersection of two distinct, Dominican boutique cigar maker blending styles. Incorporating each cigar makers'



hand-selected, preferred tobaccos, the cigar delivers the signature elegant robustness of Ernesto Pérez-Carrillo cigars and the signature balance of sophisticated complexity and smoothness of Boris Wintermans' Balmoral handmade cigars. **Dueto** showcases extensively aged Nicaraguan and exclusive, stalk-cut Brazilian Mata Norte tobaccos, coupled with an Esteli, Nicaragua binder and a robust, yet elegant Nicaraguan wrapper from Jalapa. **Dueto** will be presented in five vitolas, packaged in 10-count boxes: Robusto (5 x 50), \$9.75 each; Ovación (5 1/2 x 50 Figurado), \$10.25 each; Gran Toro (6 x 52), \$10.50 each; Gordo (6 x 60), \$12.50 each; and Churchill (7 x 49), \$11.50 each.

**Altadis U.S.A.**, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. ([altadisusa.com](http://altadisusa.com)) introduced **Montecristo Nicaragua Series**, the fourth addition to the core range of Montecristo, which includes the White, Classic, Original, and Platinum series. Conceived by Rafael Nodal and AJ Fernandez and handcrafted at Tabacalera AJ Fernandez in Esteli, Nicaragua, Montecristo Nicaragua is a rich and complex Nicaraguan puro with a medium to full bodied flavor profile. Four sizes are available: Robusto (5 x 54), Toro (6 x 54), No. 2 (6 1/8 x 52), and Churchill (7 x 56), retailing from \$11.75 to \$13.70 each and presented in boxes of 20 cigars.

**H. Upmann Connecticut by Grupo de Maestros** breaks the mold of the traditional creamy Connecticut profile with a complex, robust blend developed by Rafael Nodal and Altadis's Grupo de Maestros. Rolled at the Tabacalera de Garcia factory in La Romana, Dominican Republic, H. Upmann Connecticut pays tribute to the upcoming 175th

Anniversary of the brand in 2019 with Dominican and Nicaraguan fillers, a Dominican binder, and an Ecuadorian Connecticut-seed wrapper. Four shapes are available, each with a unique maduro cap for pronounced contrast: Robusto (5 x 52), Toro (6 x 50), belicoso (6 1/8 x 52), and Churchill (6 3/4 x 48), retailing between \$8.35 and \$8.95 per cigar, and packaged in 20-count boxes.

**Romeo y Julieta 1875 Nicaragua** is a new addition to the iconic Romeo y Julieta 1875 brand family produced in Nicaragua by the Plasencia family. This Nicaraguan Habano puro is a medium-bodied cigar, delivering a complex and balanced flavor profile offered in four sizes: Bully (5 x 50), Toto (6 x 50), Churchill (7 x 52), and Magnum (6 x 60). Retail prices range from \$6.80 to \$7.95 per stick, and cigars are presented in 25-count boxes.

**Montecristo Grupo De Maestros Private Batch IV** is the latest in a series of extremely limited quantity releases representing a private blend made by the Grupo de Maestros from a "special combination" of all-Dominican tobaccos. After aging the cigars, the cedar aging room shelves were taken down and made into 100-count trunk boxes; the wood's natural wear was preserved, giving each box its own unique character. The cigars were rolled exclusively in a 6 1/4 x 48 Churchill format and retail at \$16.50 per stick.

**Montecristo Artisan Batch III** is the third iteration in a series of limited edition cigars originating from a private batch of the company's "most precious tobacco." A single accomplished buncher and a single master roller were hand picked to personally handcraft the entire collection of collectible Dominican puros that deliver a medium to



## >MERCANDISE ROUNDUP

full-bodied experience with "coffee, creamy, earthy" notes in a 6 1/4 x 52 Belicoso format, presented in distressed 25-count boxes.

Altadis has simplified the branding of Aging Room Quattro, the pinnacle and highest acclaimed brand in the Aging Room portfolio, and added two new blends. The QuattroF55 has been named **Quattro Original**, with QuattroF55M becoming **Quattro Maduro**. The range also now also features Quattro Connecticut, with an Ecuadorian Connecticut-seed wrapper over the traditional Quattro blend of Dominican fillers and binder, and Quattro Nicaragua with a Nicaraguan wrapper over Nicaraguan fillers and binders. All four varieties are offered in four sizes in 20-count boxes: Expressivo (5 x 50), Vibrato (6 x 54), Concerto (7 x 50), and Maestro Belicoso (6 x 52). Retail prices among all blends span from \$10.20 to \$11.15 per stick.

**Island Lifestyle Importers**, Sarasota, Fla. ([islandlifestyleimporters.com](http://islandlifestyleimporters.com)), released for national distribution the Island Club line of cigars, hand made from aged Nicaraguan filler and binder tobacco and finished with an Ecuadorian Connecticut-seed wrapper featuring a covered foot, delivering a mild to medium cigar in strength but with multiple layers of complex flavors. "While many Connecticut cigars have a grassy or

bitter taste, Island Club cigars have notable flavors of light spice, leather, and tea," says Ryan Frailing, vice president of Island Lifestyle. "From a value proposition they are competing with cigars that are more than twice the price. Island Club Connecticut is manufactured in a boutique factory in Esteli, Nicaragua by nine pairs of dedicated rollers. The line consists of five sizes: Robusto (5 x 52), Corona Gorda (5 5/8 x 46, Toro (6 x 52), Torpedo (6 1/8 x 52), and Churchill (7 x 52) packaged in bundles of 20 cigars. The cigars carry a notably low suggested retail price of ranging from \$3.95 to \$4.75 each.



**Villiger Cigars North America**, Miami, Fla. ([villigercigars.com](http://villigercigars.com)), showcased **Villiger La Vencedora**, the first-ever full-bodied Villiger cigar brand launched by the company earlier this year, unveiled **La Vencedora Gordo**, a new 6 x 60 vitola in the line that will come in 25 count boxes with an MSRP of \$10.50 each. The new shape joins the original three sizes of Robusto (5 x 50), \$9 each; Toro (6 x 50), \$9.50 each; and Churchill (7 x 50), \$10. A Nicaraguan puro wrapped in a Nicaraguan Habano Oscuro leaf, La Vencedora boasts a potent full-bodied smoking experience, featuring highly seasoned, hearty flavors. The line represents an effort by chairman of the board Heinrich Villiger to "push the envelope" and create a legacy cigar.

In addition, **Villiger La Flor de Ynclan** was presented in a special edition **Lancero Especial** size (6 3/4 x 43), with an MSRP of \$11. The new size is described as providing a more intense smoking experience in both flavor and smoke. Only 500, 25-count boxes will be produced each year for this special edition release. Villiger La Flor De Ynclan is a medium-bodied blend that was 10 years in the making, created by Heinrich Villiger and master blender Jose Matias Maragoto of ABAM Cigar Factory in the Dominican Republic. Originally blended over a decade ago, production was short lived and the tobaccos were set aside to age, while Matia tweaked the balance of Indonesian, Dominican, and Nicaraguan tobacco within its Ecuadorian-wrapped blend.



**Quesada Cigars** ([quesadacigars.com](http://quesadacigars.com)) has revamped its original **Fonseca Classic** line, which has been in continual production since 1974, with more a more contemporary presentation that remains true to the brand's Cuban essence, according to the Quesada family. Plain cabinet boxes have been replaced with wide 20-count boxes with bold, red-lacquered lids. "Us taking Fonseca and revamping it, marks the perfect representation of the torch being passed on to us, and we are happy to take Fonseca away from the past and on to its next chapter in this journey called Quesada Cigars" said the senior brand director, Raquel Quesada. The blend of Dominican fillers and binders and U.S.A. Connecticut wrapper remains unchanged, but thanks to recent exceptional Dominican crops, the blend now features "more presence of flavors in the palate," according to production Manager Miguel Nuñez. Four vitolas are offered: 5-50 (5 x 50), 10-10 (7 x 50), and 8-9-8 (5 1/2 x 43) in 24-count boxes, and 2-2 (4 x 40) in 10- and 50-count boxes of ten and fifty cigars. Prices remain the same, ranging from \$5.56 to \$9.08 each at retail.



**Boveda, Inc.**, Minnetonka, Minn. ([bovedainc.com](http://bovedainc.com)), showcased its **Boveda Smart Sensor**, which it is now offering through retail channels, having lowered the suggested retail price by half to \$20. The Boveda Smart Sensor Starter Kit includes Boveda's One-Step Calibration Kit for initial calibration, necessary prior to syncing the smart sensor via Bluetooth to the Boveda smart phone app for ongoing, hassle-free humidifier monitoring from a smartphone. Users can customize temperature and humidity ranges for each humidifier and receive alerts if readings veer outside of preferred settings, and



catch damaging conditions that could affect stored cigars through real-time temperature, humidity, and impact data. In addition, users can remotely monitor humidors by using a second compatible tablet or phone to extend the sensor's 100-foot reach. Accuracy of the sensor is  $\pm 4\%$  RH out of the box; with one-point calibration it drops to  $\pm 2.5\%$  RH, while two-point calibration is  $\pm 1.5\%$  RH.



Nat Sherman, Inc., Englewood, N.J. (natsherman.com) unveiled a realignment of its portfolio of blends across three core brands, which have all received a visual face lift, ensuring that the products are "positioned for

continued growth," says Michael Herklots, vice president of retail and brand development. None of the blends are changing, but the packaging has been updated to reflect the new branding strategy. The company's premium cigar portfolio features three core brands. While each brand has its own look and feel, every cigar features a secondary gold band indicating it is exclusively for Nat Sherman International. **Metropolitan** is a classic collection of premium cigars that embodies the most traditional expressions of their origins. The brand features the current Metropolitan Connecticut, Maduro, and Habano blends as well



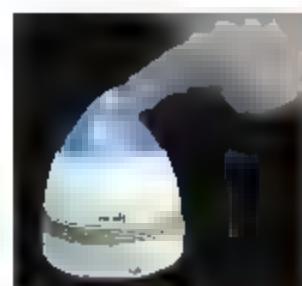
as the company's top selling Host and Host Maduro blends. **Timeless** is a diverse collection of the company's most inspired and unique, award-winning blends, combining multiple countries of origin and seed varieties, vintages, and leaf positions to offer "elaborate complexity with deliberate development of strength, flavor, and aroma" from shape-to-shape and start-to-finish. The Timeless lineup includes Prestige (formerly Timeless Dominican), Supreme (formerly Timeless Nicaraguan), Sterling, and Panamericana. Additionally, Nat Sherman's popular "Nat's cigarillos" are now offered as **Timeless Cigarillos**. **Epoca** made its return to the American market in 2014. Once owned by the



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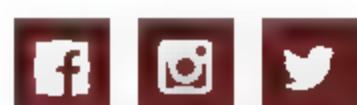
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company's founder, Nat Sherman, it was a popular brand in America in the early part of the 20th Century. A "Clear Havana," it was originally made in New York City using Cuban tobaccos and a domestic wrapper. Today, Epoca replicates the look, feel, and taste of what the brand once was.



Davidoff of Geneva USA, Pinellas Park, Fla., (davidoff.com), showcased the sixth release of the **AVO Improvisation Series**—a limited series inspired by "unexpected combinations of music and cigars." The latest installment, **AVO Improvisation 30 Years**, celebrates the 30th anniversary of AVO Cigars.

Limited to only 3,400 boxes worldwide, it features an "improvised" blend based on the AVO

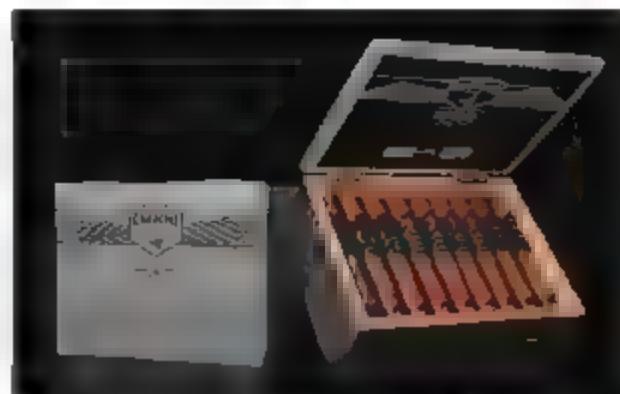
Classic No. 3, using the same wrapper from Ecuador, but different Dominican binder and filler tobaccos for deeper flavor and complexity. The 7 1/2 x 50 Double Corona is presented in white packaging inspired by the textures from Avo's hallmark hat and white linen suits.

Davidoff has brought back its affordable large ring gauge line with new branding under the **Urban Artists & Cigars Collective** moniker, the latest collaboration with UR New York's urban artists Fernando Romero and Mike Baca, who have teamed up with the Davidoff on several Zino Platinum projects as well as custom art installations for Davidoff Lounges.

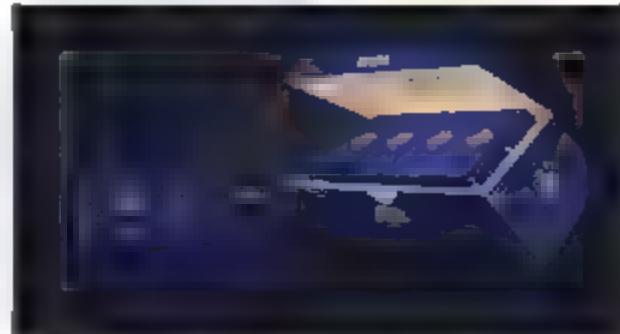
**Back2Back Connecticut** features Dominican fillers, Mexican binder, and



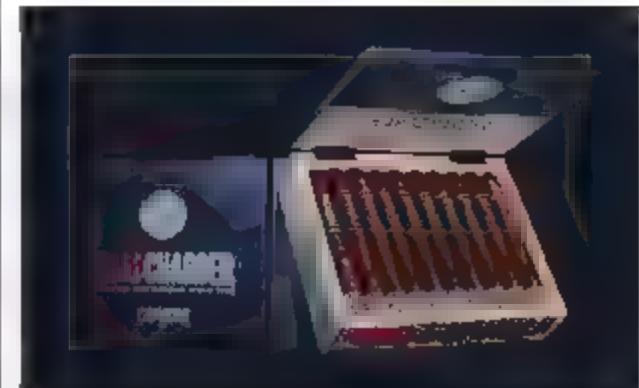
Connecticut wrapper, while **Back2Back Nicaragua** is a Nicaraguan puro. Both blends are offered in three sizes: 5 1/2 x 50 (\$6.49 each) and 6 x 60 (\$7.49 each) in 10-count bundles or 50-count boxes, and 7 x 70 (\$8.49 each) sizes in 10-count bundles or 30-count boxes.



Also returning is a powerhouse Honduran puro, **Camacho Coyolar**, rolled from "single farm vintage" Criollo tobaccos grown in the mineral rich volcanic soils of a small 15-acre farm at the base of the mountains joining Honduras and Nicaragua. Camacho Coyolar provides "blasts of leather, pepper, rich coffee and oak," according to Scott Kolesaire, director of marketing at Davidoff of Geneva USA. The blend is offered in its five original formats ranging from the 4 1/2 x 50 Perfecto to the 6 x 60 Titan. While the blend and formats remain the same, Coyolar features a new look, including revamped black bands and unique 25-count grey and black lacquered boxes featuring an abstract design of the mountain ranges in Honduras and Nicaragua.



The **Original Camacho Diploma**, also a Honduran puro, is only available once a year, limited to 1,500 boxes of 18 cigars, or 27,000 cigars total. Representing the peak of taste and strength within the Camacho brand, this cigar is rolled with 90 percent high priming corojo ligero tobacco exclusively in Camacho's complex 11/18 format that adds an interesting depth of complexity. The cigars are rested for a year before release, and presented in individual triangular slide-top cedar coffins.



**Camacho Hard Charger**, the third installment in Camacho's **Brotherhood Series**, pays tribute to "those who storm the front with valiance and are unfaltering in their sacrifice, all in the name of freedom." Featuring a bold blend of Honduran Original Corojo fillers and Connecticut Broadleaf wrapper, Hard Charger delivers notes of pepper, earth, and spice and is available in a 6 x 50 Toro size in 20-count boxes packed with shareable and collectible "dog tag" on the lid of each box. The cigar launches in the U.S. October and will extend across global markets in the last quarter of 2018. Only 1,500 boxes will be available.



**Camacho Liberty 2005 Throwback** revives the original Camacho Liberty 2005 blend in its original 11/18 Figurado format, featuring top-priming Original Corojo fillers and binder with a thick and oily Honduran maduro wrapper for a robust and complex smoke with notes of earth, chocolate, and leather and hints of spice that increase in intensity throughout the cigar. The cigars are showcased in 20 alternating red and white coffins featuring an image of a framed American flag on their lid. Only 30,000 cigars, or 1,500 boxes, were produced for the U.S. market.

> **Antigua Esteli**, Esteli, Nicaragua (antiguaesteli.com), has introduced **Segovias Habano Oscuro** and **Segovias Maduro**, two new medium- to full-bodied Nicaraguan puros that are available in three vitolas: Robusto, Torpedo, and Toro, as well as a box-pressed version. Art Garcia, c.e.o. and president



of Antigua Esteli, describes his cigars as having ■ "volcanic, robust taste and aroma from Nicaragua." Antigua Esteli's cigars feature a thick and oily Nicaraguan Maduro and Habano Oscuro wrapper and binder and fillers of top priming leaves. Garcia says the Segovias blend, like the original Antigua Esteli blend, yields ■ "rich, dark and hearty smoke, boasting notes of earth, chocolate and leather with hints of nuts and spice that increase in intensity" throughout the smoke. Its name, Segovias, comes from the rich Nicaraguan soil, and translates to "great fruits of diamonds from the earth."



Ventura Cigar Company, Moorepark, Calif. ([venturacigar.com](http://venturacigar.com)), has released the next chapter in its Archetype saga, continuing the narrative of the "hero's journey" with the **Archetype Fantasy Miniseries**, a three-cigar series that "unveils new details of the overarching story, a flavorful new tangent." Each release has been custom-crafted at the Oliva Cigar factory, blended from rich, premium tobaccos and presented in a 5 x 50 Robusto format retailing for \$9 per cigar, presented in 20-count boxes.

**Crystals** features Nicaragua Habano filler and binder with a sun-grown wrapper while **Curses** is also rolled with Nicaragua Habano filler and binder but is instead finished with a Connecticut broadleaf wrapper. Both blends are crafted with a closed foot and pigtail cap.

The third blend, **Cloaks**, features Nicaraguan filler, a Nicaragua Habano

binder, and broadleaf wrapper, finished in ■ square press format. "The Archetype miniseries reveals more details of the hero's journey," explains Michael Giannini, general manager at Ventura Cigar Company, and visionary behind the Archetype miniseries. "We're all heroes on our adventure through life, and we'll all uncover different nuances, flavors, and essences from these cigars. And that uniqueness is the beauty of this release."

**Battleground Cigar**, Enfield, Conn. (battlegroundcigars.com) has introduced the **Battleground Battalion Chest**—a compact, three-bundle POS display that saves both money and space on



retail store shelves. Retailers are free to showcase blends of their choice. Pictured are the Honduran Puro maduro, Battleground Shade Dominican, and Battleground Rebel with Connecticut Shade wrapper and Nicaraguan filler.



Foundation Cigar Company, Windsor, Conn. (foundationcigarcompany), has added a Cuban box press **Lancero** to its **Wiseman Maduro** line. The 7 1/2 x 40 shape is available in 13-count boxes and is being produced at Tabsa in Esteli, Nicaragua. The suggested retail price \$13 per cigar. Company president and master blender, Nicholas Melillo, blended the Wise Man Maduro beginning with a dark, oily Maduro wrapper from San Andres Mexico, Corojo 99 from Jalapa box per Nicaragua and will be released in September of this year. for binder, and finished with Filler leaf from both Esteli and Jalapa. The cigars reflect full flavor and expansive complexity with hints of chocolate, earth, pepper and spice and are medium to full-bodied. The first production run is 500 boxes.



The company also debuted the new **Tabernacle Havana Seed CT #142**, the latest reflection of Melilo's "visionary approach" to cigar blending. The filler is from Esteli and Jalapa, Nicaragua and Jamastran, Honduras; the binder from San Andres Mexico; and the wrapper a custom-developed hybrid, Havana Seed #142 grown in Connecticut.

Melillo explains that the Havana seed Connecticut has been evolving in the Connecticut River Valley for well over 100 years, having originally arrived between 1870 and 1880. "It is somewhat smaller and smoother than broadleaf

and grows upright on the stalk, making for better yields. On one hand it reflects characteristics that are very different from broadleaf; while it's spicy and earthy like Cuban tobacco, with hints of cedar, it also has a pronounced sweetness like Connecticut Broadleaf."

"I've been working with particular farmers in the valley since 2014 to help optimize the plant's overall health while maintaining the seed's unbelievable flavor characteristics," said Melillo. "The culmination of these efforts involved combining the seed with Havana Seed #38 and Havana Seed #1207, also known as Page-Comstock. The end result is Havana #142," which has its own unique characteristics.

"While the leaf is incredibly oily and full flavored, the leaf itself is quite thin, making for an extended fermentation process, and at lower heat," says Melillo. "The tobacco has been curing for almost three years in Nicaragua under the watchful eyes of Abdel Fernandez and myself. The tediousness involved in developing Havana Seed CT #142 is well worth it, as the leaf is incredibly flavorful and unlike any other tobacco in the world."

The brand will consist of four sizes: Toro (6 x 52), Robusto (5 x 50), Corona (5 1/4 x 46), and a Double Corona (7 x 54), and is slated to ship to retail in late September or early October.

**General Cigar Company**, Glen Allen, Va. (cigarworld.com), showcased the latest CAO release, **CAO Nicaragua**, which is the brand's first Nicaraguan-centric blend. Master Blender Rick Rodriguez and the CAO blending team developed a core selection of Nicaraguan leaves from Jalapa (for smoothness and aroma), Esteli (for strength and complexity), and Condega (for rich flavor) with a Jamastran, Honduras binder and Honduran Jamastran wrapper "to dial up the intensity of this homegrown smoke." Rodriguez says CAO Nicaragua leans more toward pepper than spice and is balanced with medium-full flavors, with nuances of nuts and toast prominent throughout the smoke. The new line

is handcrafted at the STG Esteli cigar factory and is available in three sizes in 20-count boxes: Tipitapa (4 7/8 x 50), suggested retail \$6.79 each; Matagalpa (5 5/8 x 46), \$6.59 each; and Granada (6 x 50), \$6.99 each.

**Cohiba Spectre** is a small

batch release representing an "extraordinary expression of luxury and prestige," employing fermentation and aging techniques that are exclusive to this offering. It features eight varietals of tobacco from five countries of origin, showcasing a broad spectrum of ideal growing regions, soils, and microclimates. During the curing process of the rare Ecuadorian Sumatra wrapper, a small percentage of upper-priming leaves developed a unique reddish hue and were set aside for additional fermentation lasting six months, resulting in a "profoundly more elegant" flavor. Only eight barrels of this leaf were ultimately selected for use. The blend starts with Dominican Piloto Cubano at the core of the bunch, which was aged in tercios since its 1995 harvest, with Nicaraguan Esteli leaves from the 2011 and 2014 crops, aged in Spanish Sherry barrels for rich aroma and a delicate undercurrent of sweetness and three Honduran leaves (Olancho San Agustin from the 2002 crop and Jamastran and La Entrada from the 2011 crop) adding complexity, earthy notes, and subtle spice. Only 180 boxes have been produced, made by a single buncher (Ruben Dario Perez Peña) and a single roller (Xirolma Céspedes), in a single 7 1/4 x 54 format. The cigars are presented in a 10-count circular red and silver box, retailing for \$900, or \$90 per cigar.



Hoyo de Monterrey's collaboration with Nicaragua-based cigar maker A.J. Fernandez continues with the release of **Hoyo La Amistad Black**, the third La Amistad release made at Tabacalera AJ Fernandez in Esteli, following the Hoyo La Amistad Silver and Hoyo La Amistad Gold. "We challenged A.J. with crafting a cigar that bears the essence of Hoyo, while also embodying

the spirit of his tabacalera in Nicaragua," says Ed Lahmann, senior brand manager for Hoyo. "The result is the boldest expression in the La Amistad partnership. The blend features a deeply fermented Ecuadoran Sumatra Oscuro wrapper, a Mexican San Andreas binder, and Nicaraguan Habano filler leaves, delivering notes of "cinnamon, leather, and hot sauce." The line is available in Rothschild (4 1/2 x 50), \$7.29 each suggested retail in 25-count boxes, and in Toro (6 1/2 x 52), \$8.09 each and Gigante (6 x 60 box pressed), \$8.49 each, both in 20-count boxes.



**La Gloria Cubana Esteli** is described as a "modern, full-bodied take on the classic La Gloria smoking experience," tapping premium Central American tobaccos that deepens the profile of the brand's original "white box" blend with a new medium-to-full-bodied smoke that burns to a stark white ash. Handcrafted at STG Esteli,

it features a rich blend of Honduran Jamastran and La Entrada fillers and a Jamastran binder combined with a bold, dark Jalapa Valley wrapper that imparts the lion's share of flavor to

the blend, delivering a complex smoke with notes of cedar, spice and white pepper. Three frontmarks are available: Robusto (4 1/2 x 52), \$4.99 suggested retail and Toro (5 1/2 x 54), \$5.99 each are presented in 25-count boxes, while Gigante (6 1/4 x 60), \$6.99 each are packed in 20-count boxes.

**M by Macanudo** is the brand's first flavor-infused cigar, featuring "sophisticated nuances of single origin coffee," offering a "rich and aromatic cigar brimming with tobacco flavor." It

features a silky Indonesian Besuki wrapper, a binder from the Philippines, and a peppery blend of Nicaraguan and other tobaccos for a medium-bodied cigar with notes of cedar, earth, and spice are

intertwined with hints of gourmet coffee for a creamy smoke. The collection launched with three sizes, each packed in boxes containing 20 cigars: Corona (6 x 44), suggested retail \$7.49; Toro (6 x 50), \$7.99 each; and Belicoso (6 x 54), \$8.49 each.

**Partagás Legend** pays tribute to forefathers of the hand-made cigar business who brought this brand to prominence—Don Jaime Partagás, Ramon Cifuentes, Edgar Cullman, Sr., Daniel Nunez, and Benji Menendez. This new, three-cigar collection mad at General Cigar Dominicana in Santiago

continues the qualities of "elegance, discernment, masterful blending,

and meticulous construction" these men established for the

brand. Master blender Jhonys Diaz selected tobaccos from origins of historical significance to the brand and its creators, including deeply aged Dominican

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## PHILLIPS & KING/DJARUM HARLEY GIVEAWAY

■ JEFF BROWN, DIRECTOR OF MERCHANDISING | Best Cigar Prices



Phillips & King once again held a Djarum Harley Davidson motorcycle giveaway contest at its booth. In an unusual twist, contest entrant Jeff Brown, director of merchandising at Best Cigar Prices, live-streamed on Facebook the semi-final round which qualified him as one of six finalists earning a key for a chance to win the bike, and then ultimately winning the big prize itself.

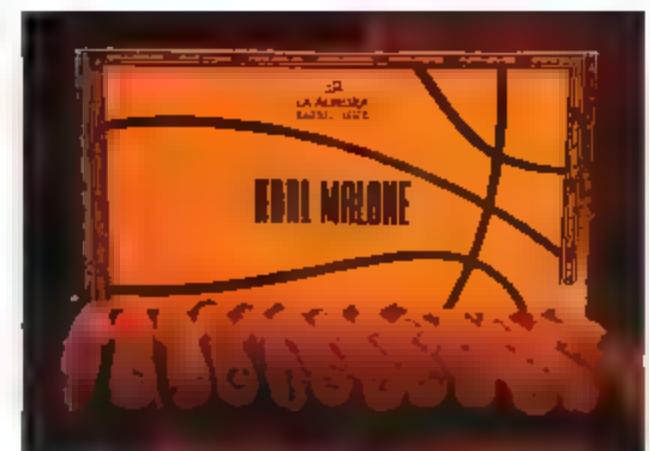
Piloto Cubano filler leaves, a Honduran Olancho San Agustin binder, and a "lustrous" Connecticut Broadleaf wrapper, delivering a refined, "multi-dimensional" medium-bodied smoking experience with abundant notes of cocoa and earth abound. Cigars are presented in sophisticated, white lacquered boxes of 20 cigars that bear the updated look of the brand in three box-pressed vitolas: Corona Extra Leyenda (5 1/4 x 44), suggested retail \$11.49 each; Fabuloso Leyenda (6 1/2 x 48), \$12.49 each; and Toro Leyenda (6 1/4 x 54), \$14.49 each.

**Punch Diablo** marks the first time that a Punch cigar has been crafted outside of Honduras, where the brand has been made since the 1960s. "We decided that we wanted to make the fullest-bodied Punch to date," explains Ed Lahmann, senior brand manager for Punch. "AJ Fernandez is a master when it comes to developing full-bodied cigars, so we asked him to create a blend using aged tobaccos, one that has strength and bold flavor to complement the rest of the cigars under the Punch umbrella." Fernandez created a blend of four-year-aged Nicaraguan and Honduran Habano leaves with a bold six-year-aged Connecticut Broadleaf binder.



and a deep, oscuro four-year-aged Ecuadorian Sumatra wrapper that delivers notes of wood, earth, and leather abound in this medium-plus to full-bodied smoke. The line debuted in three sizes: Scamp (6 1/8 x 50), suggested retail \$7.19 each, and Diabolus (5 1/4 x 54), \$7.79 each, are present in 25-count boxes, while Brute (6 1/4 x 60), \$8.19 each, comes in boxes of 20 cigars. All packaging features the brand's new look and feel with streamlined graphics.

The Odyssey brand of budget-friendly handmade cigars, which debuted in 2016, has been expanded with the release of Odyssey Maduro, which features a deeper, darker Nicaraguan Habano wrapper over Odyssey's signature Honduran binder and Nicaraguan filler. Made with premium tobaccos, the blends deliver a medium-bodied smoking experience with subtle spiciness, earthiness and a clean finish. Odyssey Maduro is handmade in Nicaragua at Plasencia Cigars SA and available in five sizes, each in 20-count boxes: Corona (5 1/2 x 43), suggested retail \$1.69 each; Robusto (5 x 50), \$1.89 each; Toro (6 x 50), \$2.09 each; Churchill (7 x 48), \$2.39 each; and Gigante (6 x 60), \$2.59 each.



E&K Trading SRL, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic ([karlmalonecigars.com](http://karlmalonecigars.com)) launched **The La Aurora Barrel Aged by Karl Malone**, a project envisioned by retired professional basketball player (and Procigar Festival alum) Karl Anthony Malone, better known by his nickname, "The Mailman." Malone played the power forward position and spent 18 seasons, from 1985 to 2003, in the National Basketball Association with the Utah Jazz, where he wore jersey #32 and formed a formidable duo with his teammate John Stockton.

Blended and produced by the Dominican Republic's oldest cigar factory, La Aurora, the line uses tobaccos that have all been aged in bulk for six years. In addition, the filler blend—which consists of tobaccos from Peru, Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua—as well as the Ecuadorian binder, were aged for an additional six months in rum barrels to acquire the aromatic notes and toasted wood flavors that characterize aging in these barrels. Finished cigars remain in the factory's aging room for a three-month resting period.

The cigars kick off with a burst of black pepper spice notes, opening up to more complex and delicate flavors of wood, cinnamon, and dried fruits, with a finish that is "potent and creamy."

The line is available in four sizes: Churchill (7 x 47), Belicoso (6 1/4 x 52), and Robusto (5 x 50), which are presented in Cuban dress boxes of 25 cigars, and Sumo Toro (5 3/4 x 54) which ships in boxes of 20 cigars.



## 2018 DAVIDOFF GOLDEN BAND AWARDS



The 7th Annual Davidoff Golden Band Awards were presented at the Davidoff 50th Anniversary Party and Golden Band Award Celebration—a white attire event held on July 15 at the Davidoff of Geneva Cigar Bar at the Fashion Show Mall in Las Vegas.

The ceremony honored Davidoff Appointed Merchants for their excellence and recognized retailers for their commitment and passion for Davidoff.

Jim Young, president of Davidoff North America, says the awards are an opportunity to recognize Davidoff Appointed Merchants who have really taken their business with Davidoff "to the next level."

"The success of Davidoff has been made possible through decades of close and longstanding partnerships with trusted merchants," explains Young. "Davidoff has a strong track record of cooperation with its family of retailers to help them grow their businesses, align on best practices, and contribute towards the increased growth of the Davidoff brand."

### ■ BEST DAVIDOFF PERFORMANCE

**Maxamar Ultimate Cigars**  
Orange, Calif. (single location)



### ■ BEST DAVIDOFF PERFORMANCE

**Blend Cigar Bar**  
Indianapolis, Ind. (multiple locations)



### ■ DAVIDOFF GROWTH AWARDS

**Tobacco Grove**  
Maple Grove, Minn. (single location)



### ■ DAVIDOFF GROWTH AWARDS

**Anthony's Cigar Emporium**  
Tucson, Ariz. (multiple locations)



### ■ APPOINTED MERCHANT OF THE YEAR

**Corona Cigar Co.**  
Orlando, Fla.



### ■ BEST MERCHANDISING

**Club Humidor**  
San Antonio, Texas



### ■ CANADIAN DEPOSITORY OF THE YEAR

**Vasco Cigars**  
Montreal, Quebec



# Checkup: Industry Advocacy in 2018

## Enjoying Success at the State Level

*Tax hikes on cigars have been the biggest, but by no means only, threat the industry has successfully fought back against this year. These efforts have been crucial to businesses.* **BY CRAIG WILLIAMSON**

As we enter the second half of 2018, we have a good opportunity to reflect on what we saw in state legislatures across the country. States have completed their annual legislative sessions and looking back we can see the legislative challenges and successes that the cigar industry faced this year. This is helpful as our industry prepares to continue to battle ongoing political and regulatory adversity from lawmakers across the country.

As we have come to expect, threats for tax increases were the predominant issue faced at the state level. In total, roughly 23 states introduced bills that would increase state excise taxes on cigars and of these 18 were deemed to be a serious threat. Examples include once again having to defend the cigar tax caps in the states of Connecticut, Minnesota, and Rhode Island. In all three of these states, their respective Governors called for increases in the tax cap and in all three, the Cigar Association of America and our industry partners succeeded in defeating the proposals.

CAA also faced down a direct attack by the State of New York that would have effectively done away with the industry standard adjustment ratio which the industry has come to rely upon for calculating taxes on cigars in New York. A proposal in the always challenging Commonwealth of Massachusetts would have almost tripled the tax rate for cigars while at the same time their neighbor to the north, New Hampshire, was considering levying a tax on large cigars for the first time. Finally, we had to strongly push back on a bill in New Jersey that would have assessed a first-in-the-na-

tion flat tax per cigar that would have been devastating for the industry. We are proud to report that in each of these states, not a single one passed increased taxes on large cigars.

There were a multitude of other issues considered in the states that could have negatively impacted cigar manufacturers, retailers and consumers.

There were attempts to expand smoke-free air laws that would have eliminated the ability to enjoy cigars in retail stores and cigar lounges that were de-

stated to regulate the sale of tobacco products including cigars. In the spring of 2018, the Philadelphia City Council began advancing legislation that would prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products and were specifically targeting flavored cigars for a sales ban. This extremely unfair and punitive measure was destined to pass when the council returns from their summer break in September.

As the Pennsylvania legislature was wrapping up their work in late June, the entire tobacco industry came together with a strategy. The strategy was to include an amendment to one of the budget bills being considered by the legislature that would preempt Philadelphia from regulating the sale of tobacco retroactively to June 1, 2018. While on its face it sounds like a simple task, with anything short of perfect execution and we would have easily failed. Fortunately, the plan worked as expected and on June 22, 2018 Governor Wolf signed HB 1929 preempting Philadelphia from banning any tobacco from the marketplace. This would not

**> We had to strongly push back on a bill in New Jersey that would have assessed a first-in-the-nation flat tax per cigar that would have been devastating for the industry.**

fended against and defeated. There was also 25 states where legislation was introduced that would increase the age to purchase tobacco. As of this writing the state of Illinois was the only one that passed a bill to increase the age of purchase, the bill however has not yet been acted upon by the Governor. Again, as of this writing, Massachusetts is in session where there is a high likelihood that an age-to-purchase bill will pass.

With the many types of challenges that the cigar industry faces, our position on issues for the most part is a defensive one. However, occasionally, when the opportunity presents, we make sure that we are positioned to accomplish good proactive measures.

For example, for years the City of Philadelphia has been allowed by state

have been possible without CAA, Altria, RJR, the Pennsylvania retailer associations, our member companies, and others coming together and working as one for a common goal.

With the year more than halfway done and states finished with their work, we are proud of the position we are in and of our accomplishments to date. As an industry, we will without a doubt face challenges in the future. With the continued support of the members of CAA we will face those challenges head on with resolve and a determination to protect our great industry for many years to come.

**Craig Williamson** is president of the Cigar Association of America, Tel: (202) 223-8204, Web: [cigarassociation.org](http://cigarassociation.org).

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## NATO Submits Comments to FDA on Flavors and Cigars

There's plenty at stake with the FDA's latest round of proposed rule-making, focused on flavored tobacco products and an attempt to understand user habits of premium cigars. **BY THOMAS BRIANT**

The National Association of Tobacco Outlets (NATO) has submitted comments to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in response to the agency's Advanced Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) regarding potential regulations that could restrict the use of flavors in tobacco products and survey information about adult use of premium cigars.

In these ANPRMs, the FDA requested comments from the public and the industry about the use of flavors in other tobacco products (OTP) and for information and data on the use of premium cigars.

The ANPRM on flavors indicates that the FDA is considering restrictions or prohibitions on the use of flavors in tobacco products, while it is also seeking information in the ANPRM on premium cigars to better understand the use of these premium products.

NATO's comments on the flavor ANPRM focused on many different issues and concerns which included the following:

1. *The importance of consumer choice for flavored products, whether that be soft drinks, coffee, alcoholic beverages or tobacco products.*
2. *The Congressional limitation imposed on the FDA that prohibits the agency from banning an entire class of tobacco products. However, an across-the-board ban on flavors would for all intents and purposes prohibit the sale of pipe tobacco and many other categories of products including certain cigars, electronic cigarettes, vapor products, and hookah tobacco.*
3. *The FDA's potential consideration of restricting or prohibiting the advertisement of flavored tobacco products is unconstitutional since the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects free speech, which includes commercial speech in the form of advertising.*
4. *The likelihood of a significant illicit market for flavored tobacco if the FDA mandates the elimination of flavors.*
5. *The need to conduct an educational campaign so that adults do not serve as a source of tobacco for underage youth.*
6. *The decline in the legal sale of flavored tobacco products and the need for a fiscal impact analysis so that state and federal lawmakers are aware of the potential for reduced tobacco product excise tax revenue and sales tax collections.*

In the ANPRM regarding premium cigars, the FDA requested comments from the public and the industry about when individuals began smoking premium cigars and premium cigar use patterns.

For NATO's comments, the association surveyed its members to provide responses to some of the questions asked by the FDA regarding the use of premium cigars. The survey information that NATO provided to the FDA includes the following:

1. *The average age range that individuals begin smoking premium cigars is between 25 and 35 years old.*
2. *The percentage of premium cigar smokers that use other tobacco products included 54% smoke a pipe, 52% smoke domestic cigars, 24% smoke cigarettes, 11% use smokeless tobacco, and 7% use electronic cigarettes or vapor products.*
3. *While the survey responses varied, most premium cigar smokers smoke two to five premium cigars per week and ten to twenty-five premium cigars per month.*

The FDA will now be reviewing the comments submitted on each of the ANPRMs and then decide whether to draft proposed regulations..

**Thomas Briant** is executive director of the National Association of Tobacco Outlets (NATO), Toll-free: (866) 869-8888, Web: [www.natocentral.org](http://www.natocentral.org).





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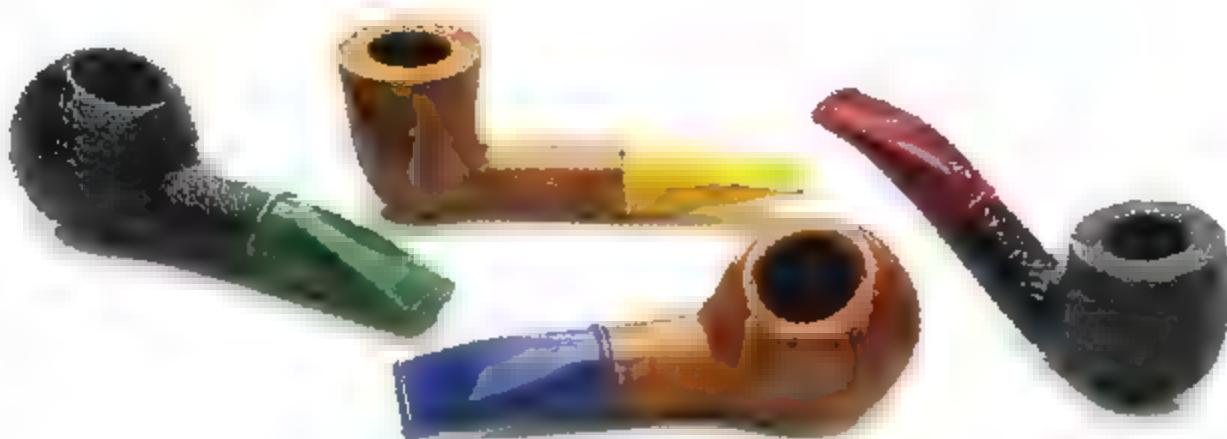
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## Savinelli Adds Pocket-Size Mini Series

For pipe smokers with busy lifestyles, Savinelli's Mini series offers compact renditions of some of the Italian pipe maker's most popular shapes, interpreted in pieces that can slip into a pocket with ease. The series is available in a choice of three shapes—321 (half-bent Author); 409 (straight Dublin with conical bowl and round shank); and 601 (a classic bent Billiard)—in either a warm-stained, smooth polish (\$120 retail) or a dark-stained, dimpled rustication (\$100 each). Short acrylic stems are offered in a choice of vibrant blue, green, red, or yellow.

**Savinelli S.R.L.**, Milan, Italy, Web: [savinelli.it](http://savinelli.it); **Laudisi Enterprises, Inc.**, Little River, S.C., Tel: (843) 491-4150, Email: [Sales@laudisi.com](mailto:Sales@laudisi.com), Web: [laudisi.com](http://laudisi.com).

## Mac Baren Tobacco Extends HH Series with Balkan Blend and Burley Flake Pressed

Mac Baren Tobacco Company has added two new blends to its HH Series, inspired by the company's fourth generation master blender and owner, Henrik Halberg.

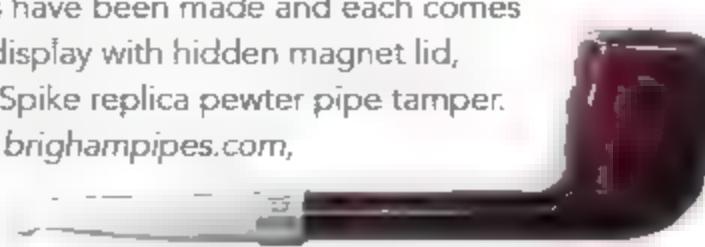
HH Balkan Blend is a spicy yet smooth and well-balanced "all day" English blend of Virginias, Turkish Oriental, Cyprian Latakia, and Burley, while HH Burley Flake is a blend of quality Burley with some Virginias and dark fired Kentucky and pressed it into a beautiful flake. Both blends are offered in 50gm and 100gm tins.

**Mac Baren Tobacco Co. A/S**, Svendborg, Denmark, Web: [mac-baren.com](http://mac-baren.com); **Sutliff Tobacco/Mac Baren Tobacco**, Richmond, Va., Tel: (704) 796-3520, Email: [kdkinkins@sutliff-tobacco.com](mailto:kdkinkins@sutliff-tobacco.com), Web: [sutliff-tobacco.com](http://sutliff-tobacco.com).



## Brigham's Limited Edition Sesquicentennial Pipe

The Limited Edition Brigham Sesquicentennial Pipe is a Canadian shape with pewter Canada 150 cuff and marbled white acrylic stem. Only 150 pipes have been made and each comes with a Certificate of Authenticity, High gloss wood display with hidden magnet lid, Canadian Mint Canada 150 50-cent coins, and Last Spike replica pewter pipe tamper. **Brigham Pipes**, Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada, Web: [brighthampipes.com](http://brighthampipes.com); **Sutliff Tobacco**, Web: [sutliff-tobacco.com](http://sutliff-tobacco.com).



## New Moonshine Cannonball Pipes from BriarWorks

The Moonshine Cannonball is the largest, chubbiest Moonshine pipe yet created by Moonshine Pipe Co. A stout pipe with a generous chamber, Cannonball features a steep bend that none-the-less makes it a comfortable clencher.



They measure 5 inches long by 2 inches tall, and weigh 2.4 oz. The series is available in six finishes (Dark Contrast Smooth, Light Contrast Smooth, Leather Blast, Midnight Blast, and Wire Rusticated) with five stem color options (black, white, amber, tortoise), retailing from \$129 to \$149.

Moonshine Pipes are produced by the BriarWorks team of pipe makers in Tennessee, featuring a modern take on classic shapes, appealing to both new and experienced pipe smokers, alike.

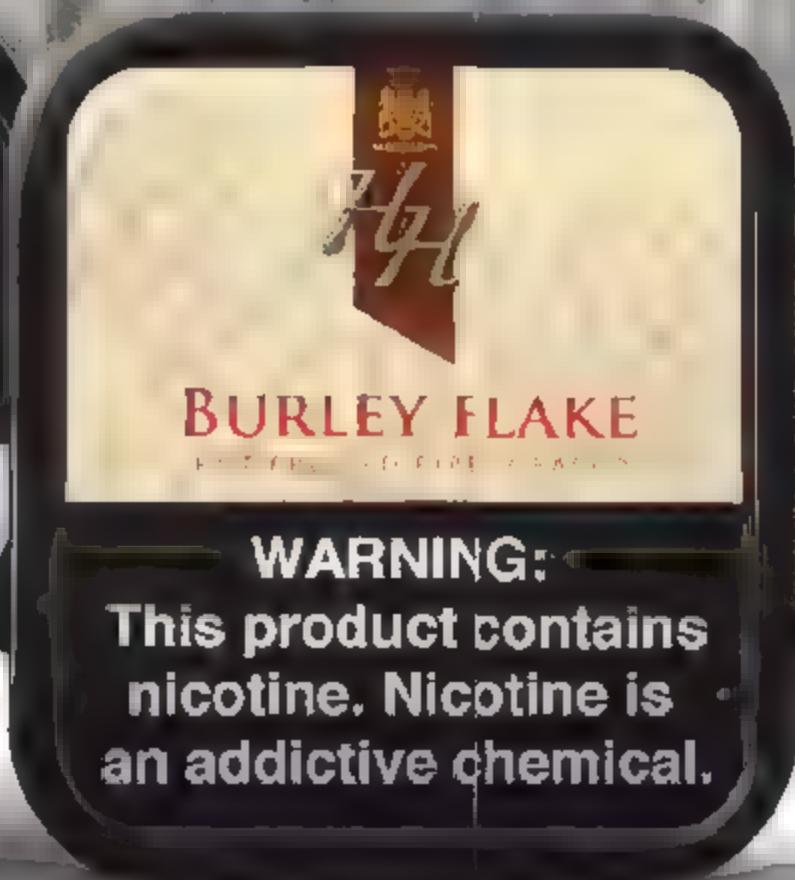
**Moonshine Pipe Co./BriarWorks USA**, Columbia, Tenn., Tel: (931) 223-8985, Web: [briarworksusa.com](http://briarworksusa.com).



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*We welcome the two new  
members of the HH Family*

## Nicarango, Handmade Nicaraguan Bundles in Connecticut, Maduro Blends from Arango Cigar

Arango Cigar Co. recently introduced Nicarango cigars at the 2018 IPCPR trade show. These affordable bundle cigars are produced in Esteli, Nicaragua and are available in a choice of two different wrappers and two sizes. According to Arango, the mellow-bodied yet robust and full-flavored cigars features a creamy smooth flavor that appeals to all types of cigar smokers.

The cigars are made from Nicaraguan fillers, an Ecuadorian Sumatra binder, and either an Ecuadorian Sumatra (natural) or Connecticut Broadleaf (maduro) wrapper, offered in Supremo (6 1/4 x 45), wholesaling for \$22.45 per bundle of 20, and Toro (6 x 50), wholesaling for \$21.20 per bundle. The cigars are individually cello-wrapped and have attractive, eye-catching graphics.

**Arango Cigar Co.**, Northbrook, Ill., Toll-free: (800) 222-4427, Email: [sales@arangocigarco.com](mailto:sales@arangocigarco.com), Web: [arangocigarco.com](http://arangocigarco.com).



## Joya de Nicaragua extends its "Modern" Joya Lineup with Joya Silver

Joya de Nicaragua continues to expand its "Joya" line-up, which represents the adventurous and non-traditional side of Nicaragua's oldest cigar factory, with the release of Joya Silver, a box pressed cigar that delivers a dynamic complexity of fresh spice, chocolate, and cherry notes, according to the company.

Its oscuro upper-priming wrapper showcases the perfect complement between the richness of the Nicaraguan fillers and the refined sweetness of the Ecuador-grown wrapper and Mexican binder. The result is a medium to full body smoke that achieves an indulging matching of flavors.

Joya Silver is available in four sizes, presented in contemporary stained boxes of 20 cigars: Ultra (6 1/4 x 46), \$6.30 each; Toro (6 x 52), \$7.80 each; Corona (5 1/4 x 42), \$6.30 each; and Robusto (5 x 50), \$7.10 each. Drew Estate will distribute the brand in the USA as part of the company's exclusive agreement. Silver will also be available worldwide through Joya de Nicaragua's International Marketing Division and partners.

"In the year of our 50th anniversary, we want to be recognized as a cigar factory that delivers the expected timeless quality of a Nicaraguan cigar, but that is also willing to evolve and take on new challenges," said Mario Pérez, Joya de Nicaragua's general manager. "On top of creating a cigar for the Joya Line with a more complex flavor profile, we wanted to create a strong visual impact. Joya Silver's packaging is probably the edgiest in our portfolio, making it a smoke that shines."

**Joya de Nicaragua**, Esteli, Nicaragua, Web: [joyacigars.com](http://joyacigars.com); distributed in U.S. by **Drew Estate**, Miami, Fla., Tel: (786) 581-1800, Web: [drewestate.com](http://drewestate.com).



## Maya Selva Releases Villa Zamorano Reserva

Maya Selva Cigars introduces U.S. aficionados to the Reserva collection, a new take on the flavor of the original Villa Zamorano, a hand-made cigar rolled with premium tobacco.

These Honduran-made Honduran puros will appeal to the daily smoker who enjoys a solid and consistently good smoke, without breaking the bank, says company founder Maya Selva. This new collection features a higher quality of tobacco grown from the best Honduran fields, including a Honduran Jamastrán wrapper. After many trials and tastings, Maya has finally settled on this new blend that will "delight those already familiar with the flavor and boldness of the classic Villa Zamorano puros."

Villa Zamorano Reserva is available in four sizes: Expresso (3 1/2 x 52), Robust (5 x 50), El Gordo (5 x 56), and No. 15 (5 1/2 x 54), presented in 20-count slide-top boxes.

Flor de Selva was launched in France in 1995, and today includes the Cumpay and Villa Zamorano brands. The success of these cigars in Europe is a fitting tribute to the values that are Maya Selva's hallmark: stringent quality requirements and respect for the land and its communities.

**Maya Selva Cigars**, Hollywood, Fla., Tel: (954) 842-3613, Fax: (954) 342-9743, Web: [mayaselvacigars.com](http://mayaselvacigars.com).

## ► Gran Habano Debuts Blue in Green Line; Fifth Gran Reserva Installment; Tubos

Corojo No. 5 Maduro Collection; Relaunch Core Line

Tubos Gran Habano, produced by the father-and-son team of Guillermo and George Rico at their G.R. Tabacalera Unidas factory in Honduras, is rolling out several new offerings at the 2018 IPCPR Trade Show.

Blue in Green by Gran Habano is crafted from select vintage tobaccos, tapping rich Nicaraguan fillers and binder and a Connecticut shade wrapper for a medium body blend that will debut in Gran Robusto (6 x 54), Robusto (5 x 52), and Churchill (7 x 48) sizes, retailing from \$6.70 to 7.30 each, packaged in 20-count boxes.

The Gran Habano Gran Reserva #5 2012 is the fifth release in the company's Gran Reserva series, offering a "bold new experience in full-bodied premium cigars" that made entirely from vintage tobaccos from the 2012 harvest. Ricos say to expect a "remarkably smooth, earthy and spicy smoke, accompanied by notes of sweet wood and espresso of this aged smoke" that uses Nicaraguan and Costa Rican filler, and Nicaraguan binder and wrapper. Five sizes will be offered in 20-count boxes: Corona Gorda (5 5/8 x 46), Gran Robusto (6 x 54), Imperial (6 x 60), Czar (6 x 66), Grandioso (7 x 70), retailing between \$8 and \$11 each.

The Colección De Elegancia Corojo No. 5 Maduro is a 50-count sampler box (\$356 suggested retail) featuring 10 sticks of each of the five different sizes in the

Corojo No. 5 Maduro line, which is the strongest blend in the Gran Habano profile.) This blend features a "flawless," noticeably red, sun grown Nicaraguan Maduro wrapper, Nicaraguan and Costa Rican filler, and Habano binder delivering rich, full-bodied flavors of dark chocolate and hints of spice. The shapes are Lunch Breaks (4 1/2 x 40), Petite Corona (5 1/2 x 42), Corona (6 x 44), Lancero (7 x 38), and Figurado #200 (5 x 48).

Gran Habano has reintroduced "clear tube" packaging for the 6 x 54 Gran Robusto size of its core line products, consisting of the Gran Habano Connecticut #1,

Habano #3, Corojo #5, and Corojo No. 5 Maduro. The tubos will be available in both 5- and 10-count boxes, retailing for \$8 per stick.

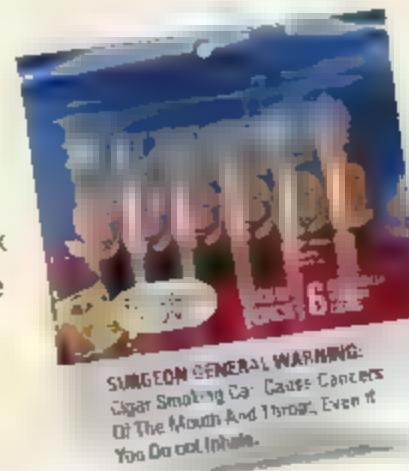
**Gran Habano**, Doral, Fla., Tel: (305) 436-5960, Web: [ghcigars.com](http://ghcigars.com).



## ► Pack of Punch Features Six Punch Classics

General Cigar Co. has rolled out a new humidity sealed six-pack to retail that ships in a counter top display featuring the brand's signature red and blue design and iconic brand's iconic namesake, Mr. Punch. Pack of Punch contains some of the brand's most popular blends and sizes, all handmade in Honduras: Punch Champion in both Natural and Double Maduro (4 1/2 x 60); Punch Rare Corojo Champion (4 1/2 x 60); Punch Elite (5 1/4 x 45); Punch Grand Cru Robusto (5 1/4 x 50); and Punch Deluxe Royal Coronation (5 1/4 x 44). Suggested retail price, \$24.99.

**General Cigar Co.**, Glen Allen, Va., Tel: (804) 935-2809, Web: [cigarworld.com](http://cigarworld.com), [punchcigars.com](http://punchcigars.com).



## ► Altadis U.S.A. Introduces Aging Room Pura Cepa

Altadis U.S.A. is expanding distribution of its latest addition to the award-winning premium small batch Aging Room series: Aging Room Pura Cepa, or "pure bred" in English. This 100% Nicaraguan puro is sourced solely from high-end tobaccos from the country's finest growing regions and was developed by Rafael Nodal, head of product capability for Tabacalera USA.

"I wanted a world-class cigar that ideally displayed the richness Nicaraguan soils can bring to quality tobaccos," said Nodal of the blend. "With Pura Cepa, I strived to capture the very essence of the land's core. Nodal achieved his vision by employing tobaccos from Nicaragua's four major tobacco regions—Ometepe, Jalapa, Condega, and Esteli—while working in collaboration with the much-respected Plasencia family to aid in its development.)

Akin to all Aging Room releases, Pura Cepa, is an expression of Nodal's creativity and artistry. "All artwork, whether physical, musical, or theatrical, tells a story, and a passionately crafted cigar is no exception," says Nodal. "When savored, Pura Cepa's composition stems from its full-flavored depth, painting a picture that elegantly displays the nature of Nicaragua's rich growing history."

Three handmade sizes are offered: Rondo (5 x 50), Mezzo (6 x 54), and Grande (6 1/2 x 50), retailing from \$12.50 to \$13.50 per cigar. Each vitola is available for purchase nationally, in 20-count boxes.

**Altadis U.S.A.**, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., Tel: (954) 772-9000, Web: [altadisusa.com](http://altadisusa.com).

# Product SHOWCASE

>>> GIFTS & ACCESSORIES

## > Island Lifestyle Adds Two New Tommy Bahama Lighter Models

Island Lifestyle Importers has introduced two new Tommy Bahama lighters offering "high-value features at a fantastic price-point." The **Longboard** (left) is a sleek triple-flame pinpoint torch pocket lighter available in two color combinations: white or blue body on a gunmetal frame. It has an oversized capacity fuel tank with a large fuel window and an ergonomic easy-adjust fuel wheel and pull-down trigger mechanism. Suggested retail, \$59.99. The **Rocker** (right) is a dual torch flip-top pocket lighter with a fold out cigar punch on the bottom. It includes a large capacity fuel tank with easy-adjust fuel wheel. The side squeeze trigger mechanism makes for easy function. It is being released with a black body on gunmetal frame and a blue body on a gunmetal frame, \$49.99 retail.



**Ventura Cigar Co./Phillips & King International,**  
Moorpark, Calif., Toll-free: (800) 788-9170,  
Web: PhillipsAndKing.com.



## > Winston Churchill Limited Edition Porcelain Ashtrays

The Winston Churchill "icon" (silhouette) is treated in two modern and audacious designs that reflect Sir Winston's unique wit and daring spirit in this pair of porcelain ashtrays from Davidoff's Winston Churchill Accessories line. The **Union Jack** (left) is tastefully inspired by the Union Flag, while the **London** (right) ashtray possesses a sleek and contemporary black and white décor. Handcrafted in France, both models hold two cigars with slightly angled notches to ensure the cigars will not touch one another, while the large bottom bowl welcomes a generous amount of ashes. Only 200 individually pieces were made of each design. Suggested retail, \$350.

**Davidoff of Geneva USA**, Pinellas Park, Fla., Tel: (727) 828-5400, Web: [davidoff.com](http://davidoff.com).

## > Colibri's Quasar Cut Cigar Cutter

This year, Colibri Group celebrates 90 years since its founding in 1928, and it continues to build upon its legacy of innovation and thoughtful design. Among the many new items it is launching this year, the company has announced the release of the Colibri Quasar Cut pocket cigar cutter, an extension of the popular Quasar cigar accessory series which includes a humidor, ashtray, and desktop two-in-one cutter. Based on the best-selling Colibri Cut double-guillotine cigar cutter, the Quasar Cut is adorned with the Quasar series signature three-dimensional pyramidal facets that also help give a secure grip on the instrument when in use. Quasar Cut also features an innovative open-surface blade, allowing only the cutting edge to slice through the cigar. Eight finishes will be available: matte black, matte silver, matte charcoal, matte red, blue, neon green, black + polished chrome, and black + polished rose.



## > Brigham Pipes Debuts Leather Cigar and Pipe Accessories

Brigham Pipes has launched a range of hand made leather smoking accessories. For pipes, there are zippered cases that accommodate one, two, or four pipes with separate pouches for tools or accessories, and a simple, classic roll-up tobacco pouch (retailing from \$34.95 to \$119.95). For cigars, there are three different length cigar cases that accommodate robustos, toros, or coronas in two- or three-finger versions (retailing from \$27.95 to \$32.95). Each model is available in a choice of classic black Italian leather or a soft, distressed vintage-style buff burnish.

**Brigham Pipes**, Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada, Web: [brighthampipes.com](http://brighthampipes.com); distributed in U.S. by **Sutliff Tobacco**, Web: [sutliff-tobacco.com](http://sutliff-tobacco.com).



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or contact directly [roll4you@delfortgroup.com](mailto:roll4you@delfortgroup.com)

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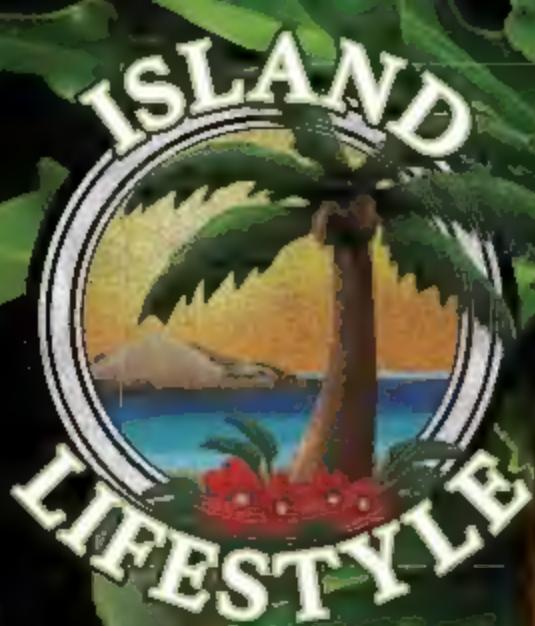
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